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THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE OF JESUS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE HIDDEN ROMANCE
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Second Impression

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THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE OF JESUS

THE BRUCE LECTURES, 1917

BY

JAMES ALEX. ROBERTSON, M.A., D.D.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

In any undertaking of this nature one's indebtedness is always infinitely greater than can be recorded. Some indication of the extent of it may be gathered from the footnotes. But the names of two friends who have given special assistance in the preparation of the Lectures must here be mentioned. Miss E. A. Stewart, authoress of "Pilgrimage and Battle," has given valuable help in criticism of the thought, and also of the form of its expression. To Rev. Oliver Dryer, M.A., Gartmore, the author is also indebted for much useful suggestion, and for help in the correction of proofs and preparation of indexes.

The author is grateful to Professor Moffatt, D.D., D.Litt., for his kindness in writing the Foreword.

Edinburgh,
August, 1917.

Re-issues were made of this book in February, 1918, and again in November, 1918. A fourth issue is now called for, and it has not been thought advisable, owing to the cost, to make any further alterations, in addition to those already made.

J.A.R.

March, 1921.

"In looking at an extraordinary man, it were good for the ordinary man to be sure of *seeing* him, before attempting to *over*-see him."—CARLYLE.

FOREWORD

THE reality of Jesus comes to us through the story of the gospels, and it becomes real to us as our mental and moral attitude towards the life and its record is characterised by reality, that is, by a spirit which is free from impressionism and from antiquarianism. These are two of the subtle errors which deflect a modern's vision of Jesus. In avoiding the one, it is easy to slip into the other. To see the Jesus of the gospels requires eyes as well as spectacles ; a critical study of the record cannot dispense with imagination, otherwise it remains external, and an interpretation of Jesus requires the historical method if it is not to be a piece of fanciful modernising. In the present study, it will be found that the writer has endeavoured to apply both methods fairly to his task. The basis of the work rests on the synoptic narrative as a collection of sources, and Mr. Robertson has used these in the light of good scholarship. But he has not forgotten to use what may be called the psychological method, in order to gain insight into the self-consciousness of Jesus. It is an idealistic psychology which will be found in these pages. Only, the main point to be borne in mind is that such a use of the imagination as the writer makes is legitimate in principle, whatever may be thought of the particular results. In history and in poetry the imaginative faculty is the power of seeing realities, not of weaving fancies, and the synoptic gospels are in a true sense

both history and poetry. People are suspicious of "modernising" now-a-days, and rightly. But the sense of vocation, for example, is not a modern product in the religious life; reverence, obedience, the strain of faith, and the realisation of what is involved in the vision of God, these are older than our wise twentieth century. It is a service to Christian faith when any competent scholar shows us how the religious experience of Jesus contained such elements, and to what extent they can be verified from the context of our own experience. Mr. Robertson's book is a fresh and fruitful attempt to furnish us with an interpretation of this kind. The substance of it was delivered as a course of lectures on "The Inner Experience of Jesus," and I feel sure that in written form it will make the same impression upon readers as it did upon those who had the privilege of listening to the spoken word. Mr. Robertson brings more than critical training to his difficult task. He has the fine gifts of moral insight and spiritual penetration. What he has produced seems to me to be a singularly attractive piece of work; the effect, or at any rate the aim of it, is to enable us to see the life of Jesus, not as the reflection of presuppositions which we bring to it, but as the inspiration of our personal experience in the same order of faith, and as the ultimate justification of our Christian attitude towards God and the world.

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SECTION I

The God-consciousness of Jesus

CHAPTER I

The Awakening to the Divine Presence

I

THE greatest spiritual fact that has ever emerged in the long story of the human race is Jesus of Nazareth's consciousness of God.

What is here meant by the phrase is not His mere belief in God's existence,—for belief or faith may be said only to grasp at a fact that is still largely beyond the horizon of the soul.[1] Nor do we mean His engrossment or obsession by an idea or theory, which might be purely subjective, or at best an inference from His reading of life, for which He offered, and could offer, no conclusive demonstration. The God-consciousness of Jesus was a sense of the presence of God. And by that we are to understand, not a vague unanalysable feeling, but an intuition with rational content similar in all respects to our experience in the hour of most inti-

[1] "Faith" is still inadequate, even when it is described as "an unshakable confidence such as absolutely nothing in the world can make to falter, neither the brooding of doubt nor fear of the power of fate." It was more than a "steadfastness raised to the power of infinity—such as could remove mountains"—even though this be "all faith" (1 Cor. 13^2). See O. Holtzmann, "Life of Jesus," p. 420.

mate intercourse with any finite individual whom we know and love.

It was even more than that. This unique phenomenon,—Jesus' *rapport* with the mind and spirit of God was not something that came and went, like the intermittent contact of a man with his friend. We might adapt Bengel's beautiful and suggestive remark about the closing days of the Master's life—"*habitabat in passione sua*"—and say that throughout the entire career of His mature manhood He was consciously dwelling in the soul of God.

There can be no question that, except for one dread moment, the eclipse of spiritual consciousness on the Cross, this was how Jesus conceived Himself constantly to stand with God. This amazing fact was not merely what Victor Hugo calls "the result of a grand conviction that had filtered through life into His heart, and slowly dropped into it thought by thought."[1] It was a profound experience which had surged up out of His entire environment, out of the sublimity and tenderness of Nature, out of the accumulated knowledge of the long search of His race for God, out of the throbbing hopes and expectations of the social life into which He came, and welling up out of the depths of His own soul. It was indeed the seal of the Divine Spirit witnessing with His spirit that He was God-possessed.

[1] But cf. Vinet's use of the word *conviction* ("Essai sur la manifestation des convictions religieuses").

The Awakening to the Divine Presence

" All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him " (Matt. 11^{27}, Luke 10^{22}). That is the classic utterance of this experience, which must be set in the forefront of our discussion. It occurs in the Synoptic record. It was spoken at the climax of the Galilean ministry. And practically the only[1] ground that has been adduced for doubting its authenticity is just the amazing wonder of the words themselves.[2] But the critical explanation offered for the existence of the words only creates a more incredible wonder still. By making a follower put these words into the lips of Jesus the riddle is not solved but darkened. It betrays a poor scepticism of the spiritual consciousness of one who, to say the least, was one of the great religious intermediaries of mankind, to resort to the incongruity of turning a simple peasant disciple of the earliest days into a profound and subtle theologian of a later age of learning. For if these words are not the spontaneous utterance of a genuine

[1] It is asserted that they are an intrusion on the sense of the passage (P. Gardner). But the whole passage is evidently a single pericope (Matt.=Luke). If they are an intrusion, how did they come to be thrust in here? It is the insight of simplicity Jesus has been speaking of. And His own case was just such *in excelsis*.

[2] The exceptionally numerous and ancient quotations of these words might be held to be a clear proof of their authenticity. To Harnack this is merely a reason for doubting the first clause! Men do not stick tags of theology in front of the most impressive word from the lips of one they adore.

experience they can only be the result of prolonged speculative reflection. The straight-forward explanation,—that they are the open avowal of an inner fact of consciousness,—is the only one that satisfies. As such they are simple, natural, and inevitable—all of a piece with the living context of the life of Jesus. They are the expression, clear and unsophisticated, of what leaps out like light from Jesus' words and actions in a hundred ways, direct and indirect. He at least recognised this consciousness as a personal experience peculiarly His own.[1]

We do not say that such a consciousness of spiritual oneness with God has never, before or since, been approached or even achieved, in the religious history of the world. On the contrary it has. Indian and Semitic faiths alike bear witness to the inner strain and struggle of the One Immanent Spirit of God in its age-long yearning to find the perfect embodiment of the Divine Consciousness within the limits of finitude. But except in the case of Jesus we think it must be said that the experience of union with God has not always been coherent; it has been intermittent and always incomplete. The most competent and the most sympathetic students of Indian religion admit that the spiritual pathway invariably pursued by the saints of Brahma and the Buddha was what is known as the *via negativa*,—

[1] See Appendix to this chapter for a *résumé* of the other kindred words.

the process of abstraction from what they regarded as the mere *maya* or illusion of external reality, and the subjective search for God in the abysmal depths of the soul. And even in the notable present-day instance, Rabindranath Tagore, where, influenced by the Truth unveiled by Western seekers, the search has been less subjective, the most outstanding feature is still the note of wistful longing. He seldom, if ever, knows that perfect repose of the Master's mind in God, which He seems to have called "my peace" (cf. John 14^{27}). But generally, out of a vague intangible sense of union with God, arises in this Indian poet a hankering for complete absorption and ended quest. Of the entire life of no man save Jesus might it be written "*Habitabat in anima Dei.*"

The great analogy to the God-consciousness of Jesus is to be found in the Christ-consciousness of St. Paul. It is probably the most remarkable spiritual phenomenon in the New Testament next to this consciousness of Jesus. And the illustration at once smites one with its obvious contrast. Here is the ideal type of Christian experience: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2^{20}). The ecstatic experience of St. Paul, as of every Christian, is made possible only through Christ. And not even St. Paul lived always on this high altitude of soul. Elsewhere he confesses: "I count not myself to have apprehended, but . . . I

press toward the mark" (Phil. 3^{13}). And this, no doubt, describes the spiritual state of most believers. At best they have to be content to say with Luther that they are "almost Christians,"—almost Christ-possessed. But it is this experience of "Christ-within" that is at once the supreme Christian experience, and the ideal goal for all Christian faith. And it *is* a genuine consciousness of God, for, as St. Paul elsewhere expresses it, "through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2^{18}). But mark the words just quoted. Are they not the assent of the Christian heart to the truth of the closing phrase in the great utterance of the God-consciousness of Jesus: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, *and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him*"?

Let us now for a moment move backward along this revealing beam of light from the soul of Jesus: "No man knoweth the Father save the Son." Surely Jesus is here expressing, not a "Sonship which is the *basis* of a mutual knowledge between Himself and the Father,"[1] but a unique inner experience of mutual knowledge which is the ground of His claim of Sonship.[2] The Son is He who has seen the surgent

[1] "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics." Vol. VII., p. 516.

[2] 'Jesus as little denies here the genuineness of the Old Testament revelation of God, as He does the help towards the recognition of God which Nature (Matt. 6^{26}) and conscience (6^{22}) can give to men; but He says most emphatically that all that is nothing in

Will of God beating up through life and time, He who has read the secret plans and purposes of the Eternal, and then laid Himself in perfect obedience of surrendered will beneath it all. Only one with such a moral and spiritual experience could enter upon that perfect repose of conscience which walks in the light of a felt Divine approval. Only He can be *the* Son, between whose will and God's there never has been interruption or estrangement. The inner voice that proclaims Him " my beloved Son " is a voice that whispers through the unclouded conscience " in Thee I am well-pleased." And only He can dare to utter back the unqualified response " My Father."

It may be urged that such a filial consciousness is open to every man who perfectly obeys the Divine call. It may be so. We are not here dealing with a question of ideal possibility. We are trying to spell out in halting letters a unique fact of history. Nowhere else in the annals of mankind do we ever find an obedience, perfect, woven without seam throughout, from the crisis-hour of childhood when the nature-life passes into the life of moral choice and freedom. Only one Life ever became fit for

comparison with the knowledge of God which He now brings at first hand. He means such a knowledge of God in which the *organ* of perception entirely covers itself with the *Object*. God allows Himself to be known as Holy Love, through a Man who is Himself altogether holy love, and Jesus thanks God that he has been permitted to be that man." Barth : " Die Hauptprobleme des L. J.," p. 252.

the supreme task of God in the world,—the task of leading the God-estranged back to God by the way opened up through His own unbroken communion. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son."

Take now the last step backward, in this mysterious disclosure of the mind of Christ, and you feel you are listening to a soul speaking from within the Holy of Holies: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." There is an awesome breath of loneliness about the words, loneliness in the sense of isolation of experience from that of all the world of men about Him. Alone of all His time He had entered into the secret counsels of God. He moved among the populace absorbed in high and holy dreams they could not as yet comprehend. He did indeed find love among men; but He was misunderstood even by love. This secret of the filial consciousness only the Father—or another Son—could know.[1] He stood on the heights overlooking the landscape of God's designs, and no man stood with Him. But herein lay His Divine compensation: because He was sharing the vision of God, He became aware that He shared the companionship of God. He was alone, yet not alone, for the Father was with Him. Of all the personal beings that impinged on His life, there was no one who knew Him, came so intimately

[1] And the experience of "*the* Son" cannot again be repeated, except in so far as Christ repeats Himself in us, when we enter by a deep experience of renewal into Him. There could not and there cannot be another Son.

near to Him, in all that He inwardly aspired to be, and was, none who shared His secrets, as He felt God did. His soul was a citadel invaded, and perpetually occupied by the Divine Spirit. In His holiest moments His soul in all its resolves and thoughts was one with God's—one with the central impulse of the conscious life of God.[1] Thus Christ's spiritual consciousness, even in its supreme moment, is never that condition of soul in which self is withdrawn from the outer world, absorbed and lost in the Absolute Spirit. It was always a state of mind in which the erect Conscience radiated its approval on the Will prostrate in obedience, while that Conscience knew itself owned and approved of God. It was a holy fellowship, a mutual indwelling of Father and Son. It was reserved for Jesus of Nazareth alone to say "I live yet not I but *God* in me": my soul is flooded with the sense of a Being great enough to be God, intimate enough to be me.[2]

II

With this preliminary description of the God-consciousness of Jesus we rest content meantime.

[1] Principal P. T. Forsyth's phrase, "part of the eternal consciousness of God" is inadequate. It might imply a vast unmanifested cosmic consciousness of God of far deeper significance than the Divine revealed in Jesus—a consciousness in which, ultimately, that revealed in Jesus is absorbed and lost (possibly even contradicted.)

[2] Récéjac: "Les Fondements de la Connaissance Mystique," p. 45.

The tasks we now set ourselves are (1) to enquire how it was reached by Jesus, and (2) what were the processes that wrought in His soul to its accomplishment.

And right at the outset we are met by the theologian with what seems a vital and fundamental criticism of this entire point of view. Theology has long been accustomed to build a case for identity of *substance* or *nature* in the Father and the Son; and having first sought to establish that position by semi-metaphysical lines of reasoning to say that the God-consciousness of Jesus follows as a matter of course. In answer to this objection, it is worth while asserting, in the first place, that it was precisely the impression made upon His followers by this sense of the presence of God, which interpenetrated and wrapped His personality round like an ether, that led them by-and-by to assert an identity in substance. The God-consciousness is the primary fact with which we ought to begin, not the identity in substance.

In the next place, these philosophical categories which were at the disposal of the speculative mind of early Christianity in its attempt to explain the phenomenon have long since grown obsolete and inadequate.

In the third place, we must remind ourselves that in this spiritual region the only identification which is real is an identification *in and by*

consciousness.[1] And if it be still insisted upon that this supposed basic identity of consciousness—this unification of a soul's experience with God's—is "essentially irreligious," we would simply reply by asking another question: Did Jesus possess any other form of religious consciousness?

Whether it was a delusion, the fairest form that madness ever assumed, or real and the profoundest of all realities, only a sincere and reverent analysis can determine. On that task we now venture, in all humility, to enter a little way.

And first there is the question as to the hour of the dawning of this consciousness in the mind of Jesus. It has been usual to place the beginning of His religious experience—the first definite and decisive invasion of His soul by the Spirit of God—no earlier than the crisis at the Baptism in Jordan. Miss Evelyn Underhill's recent suggestive but inadequate psychological analysis of the experience of Jesus accepts without question that starting-point (*vid.* "The Mystic Way," II.). Certainly the profound spiritual commotion at Baptism was an influx of the Spirit of God into His soul. But was it not rather the crowning hour of the God-consciousness, and the moment when what might be called

[1] "Consciousness has this wonderful property that in it knowledge and being are made one. My existence is not dependent on my thought, nor is my thought dependent on my existence. The self-conscious thing exists only in being conscious, and is conscious only in existing." "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," Vol. VII.: Article "Jesus Christ."

His *vocation-consciousness* attained its first articulate expression? On the face of it, does not the contrast between the thirty hidden years and the short two-and-a-half years (or thereby) of the active ministry create a problem which demands more earnest questioning? Must the whole grand result of that life, wrought in the swift rushing tragedy of the closing years, be made to depend upon a sudden access of supernal Life, received apparently for the first time at the Baptism? Is there any mystic throughout the whole range of religious history whose soul sped through the stages of the Way to God with such overwhelming rapidity? Miss Underhill would probably answer, "No; but then His case was unique. It was the entrance of the Transcendent World of Spirit upon a soul that was sinless."

But that is exactly where our perplexity grows most intense. If there was no definite religious experience in this life until the age of thirty, does that not deepen the darkness of the problem of His sinlessness? Of course the knot may be cut by taking one's stand upon the recorded physical miracle of birth. But are we then to deny that the religious value of this life lies in the cleaving of a spiritual channel between His human consciousness and its Home in the Divine Life? Does it serve any end of true piety to refuse to admit that this union with God was brought about through the co-operation of the free moral upward striving of

Jesus' spirit with the effort of the Spirit of God towards self-impartation? Does it magnify the religious value of this life to base it absolutely and simply on an actual coming of the Divine Personality into Time through a physical birth in which natural laws were suspended or prodigiously expedited? Do we glorify faith when we eschew reason for mystery? Of course the soul of Jesus was the result of the urge of Creative Life lifting itself in the mounting wave of human development, until it surged into Time in the Babe of Bethlehem, creating the conditions there in which the immanent longing of God might by-and-by make its perfect response to the transcendent calling of God. Here at last was the instrument perfectly attuned by the long patience of God's laws in Nature to whisper to the Unseen listening Spirit the mystic name "Father"; perfectly attuned to receive out of the infinite Bythos of Spirit the response "My Son." It was Deep not merely calling unto, but listening to, and answering back to Deep. But our religious interest surely lies in the moment of *spiritual* birth. It is the awakening of *soul* which indicates the true hour of the emergence of Divine Life within the limits of Time. It is here in this human and psychological fact that we shall find the key to the sinlessness. We must carry the dawning of the religious consciousness far back from the Baptism into the early life of the Nazareth Boy. "It is obvious," says

Harnack, " that our Lord's consciousness of Sonship must have preceded in time His consciousness of Messiahship, must indeed have formed a stepping-stone to the latter."[1] The safe passing of the crisis-hour for sinlessness surely depends upon the period of moral maturity coinciding with the period of religious awakening, of apprehension of the presence of God.

Nor is it any derogation of the uniqueness of His experience to say that He had first of all to recapitulate in His own soul the achieved spiritual consciousness of His race in accordance with natural psychical law. In so far as there is such a thing as a law of heredity in the spiritual world, it begins to operate only after birth. The individual self-consciousness is evoked within and by the surrounding social consciousness, active to that end in the home and mother-love. " Education is imitation," says M. Tarde, the French psychologist, " and imitation is a kind of hypnosis of the individual by the environing race-consciousness." Now the great fact in the thought-atmosphere of Israel was the consciousness, well-won at a great cost, of the unity of God. It lay around, it interpenetrated and transfused the life of Israel like air and sunshine. It elevated the national consciousness to a new spiritual dimension. It turned a nation into an individual in a way that has never been witnessed

[1] " Sayings of Jesus " (Williams and Norgate) p. 245 note.

elsewhere in history.[1] And all this monotheistic experience was focussed in the first religious duty enjoined upon the Jewish parent, namely, to teach the young, expanding child-mind, in its first stammering efforts after human speech, to repeat the great *Shema*. It was the first word of religion the little Jesus took upon His lips. It was fastened in the Mezuzoth to the door-post of His home. It was possibly stitched into the corners of His little robe. The blue thread of the zizith—the tassels on the robes of adults—called it constantly to mind. It was spoken sometimes at meal-hour. It was the morning and evening prayer in every Jewish home. He lisped it in the quiet hour of the dawn when He awoke from slumber; and in the deepening gloom of evening ere the light was covered He softly intoned it in the family circle. Familiar as the "Allah Akbar Islam" of the Muezzin's call to prayer from every Mohammedan minaret to-day, it was the great call to worship—Israel's Creed—with which every synagogue service was begun: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deut. 6[4])[2].

But it does not follow that, because He thus

[1] This merging of national and religious consciousness still persists among the Jews. Israel Zangwill tells of a German conscript who, being asked what his religion was, replied in astonishment: "Wir haben keine Religion; wir sind doch Juden." This worthy Israelite was not even aware that he had a religion: he was a Jew.

[2] It is almost immediately followed by the supreme religious imperative, on which, according to Jesus, "all the Law and the Prophets depend"; and about which a modern Jew, Israel Zangwill, has said, "Here is a communion, intimate enough for a Neoplatonist."

imbibed the national tradition, He held it only as a stubborn prejudice, which He afterwards sought to purify and beautify. It was a great inheritance to have the soul lifted thus early to the height of this tremendous spiritual fact. But the process is only completed when the precociously religious soul re-traverses the desert experience for himself, and in an hour of awe beside some burning bush of imagination and insight becomes conscious that he hears again the nameless Name.

He learned it at His mother's knee. This learning by memory from a mother's lips is no mere mechanical task. All the time there is an emotional activity going on. All the faculties are awake and instinct with wonder. As Martineau finely says, " When a mother calls her children to her knees to speak to them of God, she is herself the greatest object in their affection. It is by her power over them that God becomes venerable, by the purity of her eye that He becomes holy, by the silence of the hour that He becomes awful, by the tenderness of her tones that He becomes dear." The Nazareth family evidently belonged to the Hasidim, the pious folk, *die Stillen im Lande*, the class in whom the one fact which was the national bond of unity, namely, the consciousness of being the called and chosen of God, with its throbbing heart-beat of expectation, burned and glowed most brightly. We gather from the sacred story that in Mary all that was best

in that "still piety" was represented. And we may be sure that her most anxious care would be to guard against the shadows of doubt or sin that crossed her own soul obtruding to dim the hope, by perplexing the heart, of the child. In a remarkable modern transcript of real life,[1] the son, who has been led to dedicate his life to the service of God, meets his mother in the closing years of her life, and in their serious and intimate talk he enquires about her hope, her outlook, her religion. "Th' biggest hope I've ever had," she said, "was to bear a chile that would love everybody as yer father loved me." Mary of Nazareth dreamed an even loftier dream than that, —the dream of every noble Jewish mother who was held by the love of God—that her first-born might be God's promised One to the race and the world of men. It was her hope to bear a child who would love men as *God* had loved her. What then must it have been for this Nazareth Boy to lift His wistful look of wonder into the pure eyes of such a mother, leaning His elbows on her knee! Was it not the memory of His mother—*His* guardian angel—in such a holy hour that made Him say with deep emotion once, "Verily I say unto you that in heaven (the children's) angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven." (Mat. 18^{10}). In such an hour He must have felt as if He had stepped within the inmost circle of the radiant love of God (Cf

[1] "My Lady of the Chimney Corner," by Alex. Irvine.

John 15[10]). He gazed upon the face of Mary, and it seemed to Him as if she were looking up into the eyes of God.

From His fourth or fifth year onwards, He would have sat in the circle of His companions round the Hazzan, or synagogue teacher, learning His letters, and joining in the plaintive intonation as they repeated by heart in chorus favourite passages of Law and Prophets. The very fact that the school-room was also the House of Prayer was bound to intensify and exalt the meaning of the lessons He learned. For in later days, when He had completely broken from the teachers, He never broke the custom of His early years upon the Sabbath day (Luke 4[16]). There, therefore, this great fact of the national consciousness of Israel—their sense of possession of the One God—would have been clarified and filled out in detail for the boy, when He became familiar with His people's history—a history which must have grown quick and vivid to His fancy, when He saw from the hill behind the town the summits aflame with it, the plains of Esdraelon purple with it as with spilt wine. There too He heard the voices of the prophets as they burn and glow with an ever-renewed access of this Divine life, yet speak a promise that had still to be fulfilled. He understood then the meaning of the muttered hope that was half a curse, whispered often in the crowded streets of the tyrant-trodden race, "Some one is coming! A Deliverer

is coming! Would God that He might come!" Dimly familiar, as if spoken personally to Him, these great prophecies must have often sounded, waking a responsive thrill in the soul of the boy so attuned to receive that Life anew. Perhaps the passage that He chose to read in this same synagogue years after boyhood's days may have been chosen partly because of the memory of some such intense experience, when He had heard it read there long before and felt in it a summons as from God to Him.

Probably too little has been made of the influence of the carpenter Joseph in moulding the mind of the growing boy. Only a grave, sweet, wholesome echo of his influence steals pathetically through the mist of silence that floats across his life. But it is enough. He was the father of the home. And nobly he must have filled the *rôle*, if all that Jesus found God to be could be pressed into the human name of "Father." Unbesmirched and unsullied seems to have been the memory that lingered in the Master's mind. The one or two reminiscences which we seem to overhear in Jesus' words indicate that the inner meaning and essence of fatherhood to Him was self-donation, self-expenditure, sacrifice. Joseph was a father who spent himself in love to give tenderly, ungrudgingly, but wisely, to his children (Matt. 7^{9}, Luke 11^{5-13}. The realistic parable is surely a Nazareth reminiscence). The memory of the intimacy of the friendship that existed between Jesus and Joseph lingers surely in

our Lord's sanctification of the name to holiest service. Mary's first-born son and Joseph understood each other perfectly. There was no estrangement, no relaxing of confidence ever. But there seems also to abide in this lingering echo of the influence of the carpenter the breath of an austere reserve. The description "a just man," which one tradition records of him, would seem to bear this out. In him the Law, ancient and holy, had in a measure become a thing of flesh and blood. And Jesus seems to remember him with a feeling of reverence, due to one whose exalted conception of paternal duty had made him truly great. But the holiest note of reminiscence is undoubtedly in the picture of a man who spent himself and was spent, in order that he might give and again give to his children; a man grown prematurely old in unstinted sacrifice, and dying at length in penury, a martyr to the call of home. Upon that deathbed, whose gloom was probably deepened by the sufferer's fear of hunger for his little ones, who knows what solemn charge he may with failing breath have laid upon the first-born of the home? And how completely in the years that followed, Jesus Himself must have entered into all the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of fatherhood, as He bravely sought to fill the *rôle* in the fatherless home.[1]

[1] Possibly there is an element of truth in the beautiful story in "The History of Joseph," which says that his dying pillow was soothed by the son whispering to him the secret of death. Tradition

Out of that fragrant memory comes the great Prayer of Christendom, laden with the very breath of the eternal meaning and spirit of a human home,—"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." This strange new intimacy with which Jesus addresses God is just that intimacy in consequence of which a true son can always say of a worthy father in every situation of life, "My father and I are one." And the reverence, the heavenly awe which breathes in it is the sincere humility with which a noble son would always speak of a good, true father to whom he owed so much, saying "My father is greater than I." Then comes the child's single-hearted concern that the Father's plans, and the Father's will might be wrought out to fulfilment. Only at the end come the child's requests about its own private needs—bread, and forgiveness, and loving protection from evil things. The whole Prayer becomes lighted up and interpreted in all its infinite depth and divine simplicity when we place behind it as a background the atmosphere of home, —the home the Master knew and loved in Nazareth.

And now we reach a much more sharply outlined reminiscence of early experience, which is of supreme importance for our purpose here. It is the constantly recurring theme in His preaching of the Kingdom,

is doubtless right in placing Joseph's death in the hidden years of Jesus. He does not appear in the course of the ministry, only "his mother and brethren" (Matt. 12^{46}, cf. Mark. 63). The frequency of the word "widow" on the lips of Jesus is suggestive.

that its true citizens are the child-hearted (Mark 10^{14}), and that the candidate for entrance must become a child again (Mark 10^{15}, Matt. 18^{3}, Luke 9^{48} etc.). The ivory hinges of the gates that open on this land of holy dream turn only when the portals are pressed by innocent child hands, or when we come with tear-stained faces flinging away our pride (for contrite humility is the condition out of which a new child-innocence can grow; cf. John 3^{3}). Surely it was at the touch of the hands of innocence that the gates of the Kingdom opened for Him. Is it not to the memory of His own high and holy dreams of childhood that His reverence for little children and for all simplicity is due? (cf. Matt. 18^{6}, 11^{25}, 21^{16}). It was the yearning consciousness of the boy beating against the barriers of sense and finitude that broke through "the dome of many coloured glass" that "stains the white radiance of eternity." The young adventurer viewed at length from some mountain-height of rapture, His eyes dim with joy, the Glory-land He sought. And His fresh, pure soul, turning again Home thus early, crossed its unearthly threshhold, and beheld its deep wonder and love with a child's humility, and a child's absorption, and a child's receptiveness.

There is yet another feature of this young life which we dare not overlook if we would rightly describe the facts that contributed to the dawning of the vision of God upon His soul. If Mary

dreamed the Jewish mother's dream that her boy might be God's Promised One who would love His fellows as God had loved her, never was hope more perfectly fulfilled than in this soul born to love. The selfless love, which we have learned to appreciate so well in all the activities of His later life, must have been one of the earliest flowers to bloom in the heart of the Nazareth Boy. His play-mates must have found it so. Day by day they must have felt and responded to the warm unselfish affection that longed only for a return of love, as He joined them at school and in their games. The unspoiled freshness and wonder of a child's heart must have drawn Him to it, and it to Him, resistlessly. A tear on the cheek of a child, brought there by another's heartlessness and cruelty, must ever have been to Him an outrageous thing. And as His companions grew up, and He saw the first fresh look of wonder, the bloom of reverence, dying out of the faces of His young companions,—as His wistful questioning soul sought out the cause of it, and found it in the blindness, the folly, the carelessness, the bad, light-minded laughter indulged in by older men at evil things, a burning resentment, an anger of grief, took possession of Him. Does there not seem to be an echo of youthful experience in that word shot through with intense and quivering passion, " Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that have confidence in me, it were better for

him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. 18^6)? What He unconsciously sought for and found in the clear-hearted joy and mutual trustfulness of His early companions was none other than the Divine Presence seeking to make its dwelling-place in human hearts. And when it faded out and was lost to His sight behind the world's offending dust, He felt an emotion kin to that of bereavement, and even in His early boyhood there must have been a yearning desire to do something,—anything, if only He could find the way to recover that lost possession, which had been stolen from Him by the offence of men. This was undoubtedly the fontal thing in the experience of Jesus. It was to become the all-dominating passion of His life in later days.[1] And in the awakening soul of the boy it must have added a passionate note to His longing and waiting for God.

Is the sacred moment of fruition, crowning all this early experience thus dimly reconstructed, recorded on the Gospel page? We turn to the moving incident of the twelve-year-old in the Temple of the Holy City; with gratitude for the thrifty care of Divine Providence that has preserved to us some hint at least of all the decisive religious experiences of the spiritual path-finders of the world. There are some things in the Gospel records that

[1] Vid. inf. pp. 64, 125 ff.

wear a *prima facie* authenticity[1]; and so it seems to us to be with this tale of the Temple. Obviously it is not an incident preserved and told by Jesus Himself,—like the incidents of the Baptism and the Temptation, which are simply vivid picture-transcripts of the experiences of inner spiritual crises which took place in the soul of Christ. This Temple-story reads like a mother's memory of her famous son. The story does not record the actual spiritual crisis; it reflects only the after-glow of the great hour. And the very hiatus in it is a witness to its authenticity. The breath of reality blows through the tale as it is preserved. It stands out into the sunshine and air in contrast with the moonlight and music of the early part of the Bethlehem cycle. Some of its details, indeed, are not without perplexity to those who accept literally and without question all the elements of the poetic tale of Bethlehem. And the response of Jesus to His mother, with which the story ends, is so appealingly human, so childlike in its utter unconsciousness of greatness, so tinctured with the naïve awe of every pious Jew for the great shrine, where alone rested the Presence and dread Shekinah of God,[2] that it bears the imprint of truth within itself: "Why should you have searched for me (elsewhere)?

[1] *E.g.*, that gloss on the MS. of John (8^{1ff}) is surely its own best evidence.

[2] He speedily outgrew this, of course (Mark 13^{1}, 14^{58}; cf. John 2^{19}, 4^{21}).

Could you not have been sure that I must be about my Father's house "[1] (Luke 2[49])?

But besides all this, historical probability supports the incident. It was always a day of solemn joy in a Jewish home, when the first-born became a "son of the Law," and was invited to read the Lesson in the Synagogue.[2] Jesus had just reached that age. Who will dare to belittle the thoughts that must have passed in rapid succession through this spiritually gifted young mind? And when, according to custom, there followed this first visit to the great shrine of His people's faith, and all the excitement of preparation, the questioning and guessing, the rapture of travel, the pilgrim songs of ascending, ended at last in the first sight of the Holy City, and in the solemn shadow of the Temple-courts, who can doubt that the first great hour of spiritual crisis had struck in His career? Here all the patient and devoted tuition of pious home and synagogue—the spiritual air to which the tender soul, spreading its fledgling wings of faith and fancy, entrusted itself in its first efforts to soar—is now transcended; and the strong clean wings of vision and assurance carry Him into the very ether of the Divine. The elements of an accepted piety become fused and unified under the deep emotion of the hour into a personal experience, a direct meeting of the soul in its alone-ness

[1] The most probable translation of the indefinite Greek phrase.

[2] Cf. "Confirmation" or "First Communion" with us.

with God. When He lifts up His eyes to God He finds God looking not only through His eyes, but into them. And the great word is spoken at last out of the breast of Time into the listening Soul of the Eternal,—"*My Father.*" It was the great word for which creation-throes had travailed, for which God had waited, the last link forged in the mystic chain of perfect communion between God and man.

This is the extraordinary word in the first utterance of Jesus. And it gives the clue to the silence in the heart of the story. Even if the commentators have not uttered it, is there not one question in our hearts ever struggling to be heard as we read this story,—what was it that constrained the young boy to remain behind? What was it that made Him spend a whole night—two nights—alone in the precincts of the great city—the first lonely nights of His life in all probability—unvisited, as the later incidents of the story show, by any fear? Must it not have been an unusually deep pre-occupation of mind and heart that failed to notice the departure of the pilgrim-band for Galilee? Must there not have been in the child-consciousness a feeling of at-homeness in the great House of God, which mingled with and melted into the sense of being within the Father-home of the soul? Does not the answer to His parents make that clear? Yonder He lingers absorbed in the Temple-service, while they went a whole day's journey. And when the little company

were pitching their tents beyond Bethel, we seem to see the young boy finding His way to the now deserted camping-ground outside the city-walls.[1] Haply it was Olivet, even Gethsemane, for the scenes of our great emotions are sacred shrines to which we are fain to resort in later days of crisis. And as He lay down, a mere lad, solitary beneath some aged cedar, and, wrapped about with the eerie hush of night, watched the Pascal moon and the great stars glistening in the deep blue over Kedron's vale, suddenly—as it seems to us—the deep and vivid impressions of the presence of the Divine which visited Him in the Temple-courts, broke now into the rapture of vision, and He heard for the first time in His soul the clear voice of the Divine Complacency which ever returned to Him in the later moments of decision, "Thou art my Son." It was not the imagining of presumption any more than by Jordan's banks, when He answered the call of God that came to Him out of humanity's sorrow and need; —any more than on the holy mount of Transfiguration, where He bravely faced the first full, shuddering vision of the Cross. Here face to face with the mystery of creation and its vastness, He listened to the intimate voice of God in His soul as the voice of a familiar friend dispelling fear. Here, as subsequently, it doubtless came to Him, in words of Scripture,—possibly from the second Psalm,

[1] There is a spot on the slopes of Olivet, to the North, known traditionally as "little Galilee," the place of the Galileans. Perhaps it was their customary camp at festivals.

" Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (v. 7). And He may have answered with a fragment of another favourite hymn of His : " When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful or him, *or the Son of Man that thou visitest him*"[1] (Ps. 8[3]) ? Words, at least, of meek and lowly dependence we may be sure were spoken in this hour of transcendent experience. " The Son of Man " was His most frequent designation of Himself in the days of the ministry ; and though it afterwards became filled for Him with all the significance of that Kingdom of Humanity foretold in the Apocalypse of Daniel, may it not first have come to Him in this eventful hour of youth out of just such an ancient song ?[2] This was the day-dawn in the God-consciousness of Jesus. The light that had been gathering on the horizon of the child's soul began to break and spread, fair and clear, over all His sky. This was the first crisis-hour of the spiritual process of the incarnation of the Son of God.

[1] In the Praise of Man (cf. " The Fool in Christ " : G. Hauptmann, p. 46) in this Psalm (8) Christ later found Praise of the Messiah (Matt. 21[16]). " In the Psalms we find the noblest exposition of this high and divine enthusiasm (of Jewish piety for God) . . . From the Synoptic Gospels it would seem that the Founder of Christianity lived largely in the atmosphere of the Psalms and constantly found in their language an outlet for the Divine Passion which filled Him."—Percy Gardner : " Exploratio Evangelica," p.185.

[2] cf. Barth : " Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu," pp. 238, 241, where a similar suggestion is made on grounds of literary criticism. See also Garvie : " The Inner Life of Jesus," p. 306f.

It was no process of Anamnesis, or meta-physical recollection—the recovery of some pre-temporal soul-state. Startling as is the sense of intimacy with God betrayed in His first employment of the word "My Father,"—impressive by reason of the very simplicity indeed, and the childlikeness of the emotions revealed in His reproachful question,—there is no assumption in it of a previous knowledge possessed by Mary, only a taking for granted that she could not fail to see what it was that had become so obvious to Him—His Father. Nor was it any non-moral, quasi-mystical upsurge of the subliminal. The way of His drawing near to God was entirely moral and spiritual. Climbing the ladder whose steps were dependence, trust, surrender, love, He reached His vision,—the experience of knowing God and of being known by Him (cf. John 8^{55}, 1 Cor. 8^{3}, Gal. 4^{9}).

Was there, in this holy hour of the coming of God some dim stirring of the consciousness of a Divine vocation in His soul? It would be unnatural to infer from the words any clear consciousness of destiny. The "must," the sense of being chained as by a Higher Power to His Father's House, is the imperative that drives the Discoverer rather than the constraint that urges the Crusader. Nevertheless, there is here the consciousness of one whose whole soul is given over to God to do with it whatsoever seemed good to Him, the consciousness of a

new Filial Obedience that takes precedence of all earthly parental authority. Perhaps it would be illegitimate to find in the very indefiniteness of the closing phrase in His reply (*ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πάτρός μου*) a sense of wider horizons than the mere Temple walls, or the "House of the Midrash" where He might probe into the deep things of God. But the light of such a vision of God as now was His must fall upon the conscience, as well as upon mind and heart. There must have come to Him the feeling, at least, that He had by this rewarded filial love of His a work in the world to do,—some amends to make "for the long dearth of human love to God,"—perhaps even already a dim foreboding—faint "like an echo pulsing through a dream," that He was commissioned to make a fresh offer, an offer of love from a God longing for the end of the great estrangement between Him and mankind.

Whether this adumbration of the pathway travelled by the young soul, reconstructed partly from known fact, partly—as it had to be—from a reverent search for reminiscence indirectly overheard in the later consciousness of Jesus, is correct in every detail or not, it is surely true in its main contention. The clear sense of the Presence of God first came to Him far back in the early years. The crisis at Baptism represents really the rounding out of that God-consciousness in the first articulate apprehension of vocation; which thereafter

deepened and grew more intense, rising into ever sharper outline until at the Transfiguration, after Cæsarea Philippi, it became an apprehension of a coming Cross. Not that during any part of His ministry, even from the commencement, the foreboding of tragedy was absent. There are no unprepared-for transitions throughout the whole course of the great career. Just as, when the boy's dim feeling after God dawned into an assured consciousness of God, there were also the faint beginnings of a conviction of vocation, so also, when at Baptism this slowly gathering burden of responsibility passed into the clear and definite discovery and acceptance of a Divine Commission, there came along with it the premonition of the Sorrow, which at Cæsarea Philippi shaped itself into the ghastly outlines of a Cross. But the general direction of the psychological unfolding of the mind of the Master is clear. And the well-marked stages associate themselves with these great crises,—the consciousness of Godsonship at the first visit to the Temple; the consciousness of being God-sent, God-commissioned at Baptism; and on Hermon's slope the consciousness of a Divine Service of Sorrow and Death. His lesson was only finally learnt in its entirety, His Sonship perfectly achieved, when, yielding Himself unreservedly into His Father's hands, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." (Heb. 5^8, Phil. 2^8).

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I

WORDS OF JESUS REVEALING GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

EVEN if there were no other utterances of Jesus to set beside the great word[1] spoken at the high-tide of the Galilean ministry, it would still be absolutely congruent with the matchless character of the man who confronts us in the Gospel pages. It is true of all the most saintly souls of which we have any record in human history, that they conveyed to the on-lookers the impression that they moved through life swathed in a felt *aura* breathed about them from another world. Their very humility is touched with a holy majesty; their simplicity is that of men who have been caught up into a region which lies beyond the dazzling lights of sense and human ingenuity, a region where they seem to stand beneath the naked white light of the Unseen. Their love of men is a love which has pierced beyond the brokenness of life to the native worth of the human soul revealed to them as by a Divine insight. And their purity is a breath which blows from off the everlasting hills. If that is the impression which the saintly lives have ever made on men, it is pre-eminently so in the case of Jesus. His character is the voiceless speech of His soul confessing His sense of the Presence of God. "The unity of spirit with the Father, of which Jesus was conscious, must . . have been clear and conspicuous to every true disciple. It was the dominant fact of the whole situation."[2]

But this great utterance of Jesus by no means stands alone. It is possible, in the first three Gospels, to discern this unique spiritual phenomenon,—the

[1] Mt. 11^{27}, Luke 10^{22}. Vid. sup. p. 15.

[2] Percy Gardner: "The Ephesian Gospel."

God-consciousness of Jesus,—towering up like some sublime Alpine peak, broad-based upon the character. And, to begin with, beyond the purity, love, simplicity, humility of the man, qualities which are as "the fragrance of myrrh, and cassia, and aloes on the garments of one who has been in the ivory palaces,"—there is one feature of His personality which may be said to be super-moral, adding a new dimension to the sense of the Divine Intimacy with which His spirit is clothed, and that is His serenity —"my peace" (cf. John 14^{27}). It is the complete absence of that inner strain and stress, that ceaseless aspiration and striving, that reaching-out with longing after the unattained, which is one of the marks of our human finitude, and from which even the most heroic souls have not escaped. About Jesus, the revolutionary, who drew the tempest of the world's opposition and hate against Him, there was ever an air of unnatural sweetness and calm,—the peace of a soul satisfied because already He had "awaked with the Divine likeness,"—the peace of one who had *arrived*, whose "heart was at the secret source of every holy thing." That, surely, is an unspoken, but unmistakable disclosure of His abiding sense of the Presence of God.

Then rising above this serenity there is the note of authority which rings through all His utterances whatever the theme—an original and immediate authority, underived from any earthly source. Not the *ipse dico* of the savant steeped in the lore and the wisdom of the ancients, but the authority of the man who has climbed beyond the mists of second-hand experience, the authority of one whose own lips had been touched with a live coal from off the altar by the Angel of the Spirit. Friend and foe, humble and learned alike bear witness to this quality in His speech (Mark $1^{22, 27}$, 6^{2}, 12^{37}, Luke 4^{22}).

The Awakening to the Divine Presence

Climbing higher up the mountain-side we reach the region where the subdued rays of the heavenly light begin to flash forth in hints and claims of veiled but awesome splendour. What does He mean by that mysterious word, "behold a greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12^{41}), and that other which immediately followed, "behold a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12^{42})? Out of what tremendous assurance of soul could such a word as this have come, "But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the Temple" (Matt. 12^{6})? What could be the nature of the inward experience which gives Him the right to quote the sacred Law, and yet dare with that emphatic gesture "But *I* say unto you" to thrust it aside? (Matt. $5^{22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44}$). Listen to Him as He names Himself by that mystic name "the Bridegroom" (Mark 2^{19}). Doubtless He means it for a symbol of joy, but is there no suggestion of a deeper significance still? Did He not often speak in parable about the marriage of the King's son? (Matt. 22^{2}, cf. 25^{1}, Luke 12^{36}, 14^{15ff}). Did He not, even on the dark night of the betrayal, hint at such a festival when the Kingdom of Heaven came with power (Mark 14^{25}, Matt. 26^{29}, Luke 22^{18})? Surely it had some deep spiritual significance. It was no new symbol. He is the Bridegroom of the true Israel, whose husband, in all the Old Testament was God alone.[1] Still veiled, but clearer—solemn and convincing proof of His unique experience of God—are His claims to stand in judgment over men (Mark 8^{38}, Matt. 25^{31f}, Matt. 25^{11} cf. 7^{21}), to have power to transmit the Divine forgiveness (Mark $25^{1, 10}$), to be the Son of Man summoned to fulfil the prophetic hope (Luke 4^{18},etc.), nay, even to be the

[1] It was so His immediate followers interpreted and applied His use of the symbol (Rev. 19^{7}, $21^{2, 9}$, 22^{17}; Eph. 5^{32}, 2 Cor. 11^{2}), cf. Hosea 2^{19}, Ezekiel and Deut.-Isaiah (*passim*).

accomplisher of God's supreme plan in a life of suffering service.

But now, when we ascend another reach of the heights of Jesus' soul, the God-consciousness begins to find clear expression for itself in words which slip from Him casually and naturally,—convincing because of the very spontaneity of their self-disclosure. Is not His use of the phrase "*my* Father," His evident avoidance of the words "*our* Father," when He speaks on His own behalf, the tacit assumption of an intimacy with God which was all His own (Matt. 7^{21}, 10^{32}, 15^{13}, 16^{17}, 18^{10}) ? In one memorable incident, the paying of the Temple tribute-money (Matt. 17^{25f}), there is a word in which this confident assurance breaks out, with unforced but startling clearness. "The Kings of the earth do not demand tribute of their own children," He says ; "then surely He who is the child of the King of Kings ought to be free of this holy assessment." Higher than a servant of the palace-courts, higher even than the secret friend of the King He is the "Son of the household," heaven's heir. And in the first two demonic voices of the great Temptation (a story which doubtless the Master Himself confided to His disciples) is there not a clear reflection of this awesome sense of the Divine Intimacy with which He felt Himself at Jordan to be completely possessed : "If thou be the Son of God" ? Yes, here we see the mountain of this unique experience reaching up into the region where the pure airs breathed and the light danced, which were the very life of God.

And when we turn at length to the parable of the wicked vine-dressers (Mark 12^{1-12}, Matt. 21^{33f}, Luke 20^{9f}), we feel, in this amazing fragment of spiritual autobiography, that we are nearing the summit of this majestic peak—the God-conscious-

ness of Jesus. For we hear Him daring to echo the language of the Father's heart, as if He were listening not merely to His own soul speaking its assurance of sonship, but even to the Father's voice murmuring the name with a sigh of love,—" my beloved Son." It was the voice which was heard by Him at the Baptism, and again on the holy mount of Transfiguration.

One other step, and our eyes are resting almost on the summit. It is the word spoken with bated breath about the last dread day (Mark 13^{32}): " But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The arresting thing about these words is,—not their disclaimer of omniscience (which is to us the proof of their authenticity), but the fact that Jesus here claims to rank above all spiritual intelligences in the Unseen World, yea, to stand closest to the Throne in the counsels of God the Father.[1]

Then at last comes the summit of the peak, glistening and stainless in the " light that is inaccessible and full of glory " : " No man knoweth the Son save the Father only, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him " (Matt. 11^{27}, Luke 10^{22}).

" The story of the Gospel," as one of our own least biassed scholars puts it (Scott : " The Fourth Gospel," p. 181), " is simply unintelligible without this primary assumption that Jesus was conscious of a unique relation between Himself and God."

[1] Of this utterance H. J. Holtzmann says, it is the only case in which " the Son of God " appears to have a metaphysical value.

CHAPTER II

The Reception of the Divine Self-disclosure

"How Jesus Himself attained to this consciousness is His secret, and no psychology can fathom it." Doubtless this word of Harnack's is profoundly true. But must we wholly acquiesce when he adds: "here *all* enquiry must come to a stand-still"? . . . "It was given to Jesus immediately, like the sense of His own personality, and He does not say how it came to Him, or how He explained it to Himself."[1] Again we agree. But must we be hushed into consent, when this writer further says, "This consciousness by its very nature does not admit of analysis"? Only He, indeed, who had experienced the secret, could have revealed the way to it; and it does seem as if He "forgot Himself entirely in the absorbing sense of God." There is almost nothing of the introspective in His utterances. Therein lies their power and beauty. But are there no echoes—caught indeed obliquely—in the Master's words, when He stoops to direct us the way to meet with the

[1] Professor Ernest Scott: "The Fourth Gospel," p. 181.

Father in secret? Has He not, in part at least, revealed the secret, in hints and glimpses of amazing depth and tenderness? "In Him" do *we* not also "find access by one Spirit unto the Father"? The heart of the secret, that which makes it a unique and unshareable possession of His own, that which changes the consciousness of the Divine Presence into intimacy with the Father—His Father—lies locked up in the discovery of His Divine vocation. And at this stage of the enquiry we are not yet ready to consider that. But it should not serve to make our Lord less dear, if we can indicate even in dim and shadowy outline the road by which, from the human end, this experience of the Divine Presence without Him and within Him was approached and reached. (cf. Mark 4^{32}).

It is a task one approaches with diffidence; for, to begin with, the most sacred chapters in the world's history all seem to rebuke as profane the curiosity that would dip into the hidden secret. The writings of the soul's torch-bearers all confess that the Beatific Vision is that ultimate mystery which human speech cannot compass. They wrestle and stammer and strain in many a long attempt to tell the story of the inward way they have travelled,—to capture and bind in the meshes of finite thought the vision they have seen. It forever eludes description. It lies beyond speech, beyond thought, wrapped in "the dark cloud of unknowing." Indeed

it is just where the language is simple and clear that the presence of the vision is irresistibly convincing; where it grows incoherent the vision has been obscured. Expression is, when all is said, the most searching test of truth. The measure of the simplicity and definiteness of what is seen is the measure of its spiritual significance.[1]

Jesus is the supreme illustration of the union of vision with simplicity. At first sight there seems to be nothing in His words that corresponds in the least degree to the subjective psychic confessions of the saints who have most intimately experienced the presence of the Divine. Moments of deep emotion, of rapture and vision, are indeed reported. But there are no prolonged transcripts of wrestlings, ecstasies, inner movements of the soul. A veil is drawn over His lonely nights on mountain tops, over the hours of communion when He enters into the cloud. We seem to be baffled by the objectivity of the Master's speech. The landscape of His thought stands up in clear cut contour and outline against a sky swept bare. No mists lie in the folds of the far-stretching horizons. An ocean of virgin air flows over that upland, clean and bracing. His very paradoxes and aphorisms—profound and inexhaustible though they be—are not dim opals, and rubies, and pearls of fantasy, but clear sparkling stones of

[1] The poet Blake is a good illustration both in simplicity and in incoherence.

reason and conscience. His parables and similitudes are tender and homelike flowers of imagination.

But from this very fact of the exhilarating clarity and sanity and rationality of the Master's words there is a precious truth to be won for our comfort. Not merely a truth in which we may rest with joy when we think of Jesus, but one by which we may test and judge every record of the commerce and trafficking of the human soul, which claims to move along the ladder of light that leads to " where is the vision of the Face Divine." Why should not the vision of God be as natural as breathing, as full of sweet and obvious reasonableness as the air is full of sunlight? And when this sense of God is borne to us with such amazing clearness and simplicity in the Master's words, is it not as if, facing the dim-eyed fumbling and groping of the world of men, He were confessing, of *His* vision, that

> " . . . the best is when I glide from out them,
> Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
> Come out on the other side, the novel
> Silent, silver lights and darks undreamed of,
> Where I hush and bless myself with silence " ?
> (R. Browning: *One Word More.* XIX.)

The true pathway of spiritual insight, in short, does not lie through the region of " the subliminal," —at least in the common acceptation of the term. If there is any gate-way to the spiritual world that is infra-rational, a channel of unanalysable feeling, rejoicing in what William James calls the richness

and warmth and immediacy of its contact with the Unseen, scorning the thinness and coldness and barrenness of the light that streams through the casement of Reason, it is the gateway to the land of spiritual anarchy ; it is certainly not the path to the supreme vision of God. The spark of the Divine light which is the heritage of every man that comes into the world remains forever a feeble and ineffectual spark unless the spirit of man continually struggles up towards the delectable mountains, whence the vistas of the " land of far spaces " are unrolled ;— and along those tracks it has constructed for itself in obedience to natural and spiritual law.

This pathway (1) *rises up from the moral bed-rock of humility, purity and love : and* (2) *passes up the ascent of reason, conscience, strenuous waking thought,* (3) *to the true gateway of spiritual vision which lies at the summit of moral and rational activity.*

Reason, it has been well said, is the objectifying faculty. It is that which relates the finite self to, and integrates it in, the life of Reality. The uprush of wonder in the soul is a moral energy quickened by emotion ; but only when it is penetrated and purified and knit by Reason to the Reality other than, and greater than, the self, is the soul rescued from solipsism. Standing on the heights of the soul's rational activity, both in thought and practice, " the whole self, exalted and at white heat, is unified and poured

out in one vivid act of impassioned perception," and " pierces like a single flame the barriers of the sensual world." It is there that Reality, disclosing itself as spiritual and personal, responds to and communes with the soul.[1]

And it is this way that the mind of Jesus invites us to pursue, in our enquiry into the nature and methods of His spiritual vision.

I

What may be called *the moral postulates of spiritual intuition* are embraced with tolerable completeness in the three basal qualities of the heart,—humility, purity and love. And the crowning illustration of all three is the life of Jesus. A fact which is often forgotten in analyses of what are usually called " the virtues " is that they are relations as well as qualities,—attitudes of the soul towards the environing Reality in which she finds herself. Humility is the intuitive law of difference: lowliness alone perceives the Infinite. Purity and love are the intuitive laws of similarity and identity: purity apprehends Holiness, and love responds to and unites

[1] " Between the peace of the heights and the quietism of the depths," says Ruysbroeck in a searching judgment of the cult of the subliminal long before its day, " there is all the difference that exists between God and a mistaken creature. Horrible error! Men seek it themselves; they establish themselves comfortably within themselves, and no longer seek God even by their desires. Yet it is not He whom they possess in their deceitful repose."

with Love Eternal. The things which a man can see clearest are the things he sees most nearly from God's point of view. Holy self-effacing Love is the character of God.

(*a*) Jesus was the humblest man that ever lived. In His case the breaking away from childhood was yet not a breaking *with* childhood. It was the redintegration of childhood in the sphere of freedom. It is the child who enters the Kingdom, the childlike mind that rests ever in the Home of the soul. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," He once said with exultant gratitude to His Father. Then with the next breath He claims possession of a full revelation: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father," And the moment after He sets Himself among the spiritual babes: "I am meek and lowly of heart" (Matt. 11^{25ff}). All the great things of life and eternity are simple, and they are grasped only by simplicity.

Humility in this sense has a wider range than the sphere of morality proper[1]. For its glory is the absence of self-consciousness. The childlike attitude is that of complete absorption in what comes flooding in from without. "Humility is the eye which

[1] It is the ground and condition of pre-moral innocence, as well as of purity of heart. The doctrine of original goodness is at least as true as the doctrine of original sin, and they ought to be equally emphasised. Of course the child is often the arch-egoist, insisting that all things must accommodate themselves to its desires. But it is the other aspect of childhood which Jesus magnified.

sees everything except itself."[1] It is simply the recognition of eternal facts or it is not humility. It is seen in the open-eyed wonder with which a child looks on Nature. Lying among the flowers and grasses the little soul is often on the threshold of the Eternal.

> ". . . More simple than
> The twisted, racked, illusioned mind of man,"

he feels the

> . . . "deep content, more deep than mirth,
> Or cavil of words, or tears, or questionings,
> In the slow birth and living of green things."

This mystic consciousness of the child-hearted[2] was certainly possessed by Him

> "To whom the lily of the field sufficed
> More than the glory and gold of one
> Who ruled beneath the name of Solomon."

To Him all the tender objects of the field were instinct with God. Often in rare and vivid flashes

[1] Quoted somewhere by Ritschl. "I was once considering," says Santa Teresa, "what the reason was why our Lord loved humility in us so much, when I suddenly remembered that He is essentially the Supreme Truth, and that humility is just our walking in the Truth."

[2] One thinks of Thomas Traherne's records of the mystic consciousness of childhood: *e.g.*, "I was a little stranger which at my entrance into the world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. . . . The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never could be reaped nor was ever sown," etc.

G. K. Chesterton, in one of his tales, records a similar experience reminiscent of childhood: " . . . that elfin and adventurous time when tall weeds close over us like woods. Standing up thus against the large low moon, the daisies really seemed to be giant daisies, the dandelions to be giant dandelions."

When Flambeau said, "It's like being in fairyland," Father Brown sat bolt upright in the boat and crossed himself. To Father Brown it was evidently something holier than fairyland.

and gleams the boy must have felt Someone beckoning to Him as He wandered where "the light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread."

This insight of humility, which belonged so pre-eminently to Jesus, has a double aspect,—dependence and receptiveness. It listens without embarrassing self-consciousness to the voice of the Infinite Tenderness whispering "My Son." It confesses with deep and awe-filled trust, "God stoops down to me." And devoid of the least shadow of pride it looks up to the towering heights of the Majesty that bends above it, and links the intimacy with the infinitude, saying in reverent adoration "My Father is the Great King, and the earth is His footstool" (Matt. 5[35]).

When Socrates said that he knew nothing, it was the insight of the perfectly humble mind thrilled with "a genuine sense of the inexhaustibility of knowledge."[1] When Jesus asked, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One—God" (Mark 10[18]), it was certainly not the humility of over-conscientiousness—that tendency to be always fingering one's motives, which is the sign of an unwholesome pre-occupation with oneself. It was the humility of one possessed by a unique sense of the Divine self-originating goodness, with which His own life was connected; and of its exhaustless self-communication. Intimate as was Christ's conscious-

[1] R. L. Nettleship: "Lectures on Plato's Republic," p. 44.

ness of God, it always remained an intimacy which acknowledged God as the primal Fountain of goodness, from which His own was drawn, and on which He trustfully depended from day to day. It is His acknowledgment that the Being whose voice said "Son" so tenderly to Him was the Being whose word controlled the forces of the Universe.[1] This was Jesus' way of entrance on the Kingdom, a childlike dependence on the majestic power and goodness of God, a childlike receiving of the grace that called Him "Son."

And through the clear eyes of His simplicity and lowliness there came to Him an intense and far-flung vision of God as the great Power to whom all things were possible (Matt. 19^{26}), whose reign and rule extended to the uttermost limit of the world. He was "Lord of heaven and earth"—*He* whom He had just called "Father" (Matt. 11^{25}). And "heaven," to Jesus, was another name for the throne of God,—the seat and centre of the world's controlling Power (Matt. 23^{22}, 5^{34}). The Kingdom of Heaven was the sway of this mighty Will which all created

[1] This word (Mark 10^{18}) must ever be taken along with the Sixth Beatitude. If purity of heart is the condition of attainment to the Beatific Vision, the source of purity of heart is dependent receptivity on the boundless self-communicating Divine Goodness. "Morality is not the groundwork of religion, but true religion is the foundation and motive of morality" (A. E. Waite). "Ethics must have its roots in the Divine, and in the Divine its consummation." That man has become a moral and spiritual being at all is a fact which rests on the immanence of God. And the way to the recognition of the indwelling Presence is the way of humility. There *is* a Light that lighteth *every* man. It is through humility and purity it comes to full manifestation of itself.

things implicitly obeyed,—except the human will. It was the great cosmic harmony which would not be complete until it was established in the human heart as well,—until the Divine Will was done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6^{10}, 7^{21}). Close, warm, and loving—the very food of His soul—were the commands of the Divine Will to Jesus. The man who knew how great and wise and gracious they were had reached the very threshold of the Kingdom (Mark 12^{34}). Only a step,—the last glad surrender of all things for their sake,—and the Kingdom was won (Mark 10^{21}). But when familiarity had destroyed spiritual perspective, when men had allowed the majesty and sanctity of the Divine Laws to have so faded from their vision that they could exalt the trivial traditions and precepts of men in their stead they were infinitely remote from the Kingdom (Mark 7^{8}, Matt. 23^{23}). To Jesus, man's misuse of the gift of freedom in the face of those holy laws was the great human tragedy. For against the Divine Will all defiance and rebellion must shatter itself in the end (Luke 12^{46ff}). In Jesus' judgment there was only one thing to fear in all the world—the Omnipotence that could cast the finally disobedient soul away in death (Luke 12^{5}). But the most appealing thing in all Christ's tremendous vision of the Divine Omnipotence is the infinite courage of God in giving the gift of freedom to men, forgoing forever the right to force Himself upon man's will.

Nay, He saw God everywhere throughout His world stooping with amazing condescension, wistfully, eagerly and with an unfathomable desire, to importune and solicit the human heart's acceptance of His Will, that it might enter into eternal life (Matt. 18^{12-14}).

(*b*) Resting upon Humility is *Purity*,—the second postulate of the intuitive religious consciousness. The highest utterance of religious insight ever spoken on earth is "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matt. 5^{8}). The absolute truth of it shines by its own light even into sinful eyes. Yet only a pure heart could have spoken it.[1]

It is clear that "there lie behind the public ministry of Jesus no powerful crises and tumults, no break with His past."[2] He carried "no scars of a frightful struggle," did not pass through "the desert of a deep contrition." His soul passed from the winsome innocence preceding moral maturity to that of the piercing purity that knows, without a μετάνοια, because, when that hour arrived for Him, His striving and aspiring soul, entering the realm of moral individuality, became linked in a realised communion with God. The vague inarticulate feeling of at-home-ness, child-trustfulness, in the world around Him, passed without pain of remorse

[1] See additional note at the end of the Chapter on the Sinlessness of Jesus.

[2] Harnack: "What is Christianity?" p. 21.

or penitence into clear apprehension of that Divine Presence which was His soul's Home. Thus the words throb with all the reality of a personal experience on the lips of Jesus, " the pure in heart see God." To Him nothing discerned by the physical senses was unclean, or outside the ether of the Divine. " These are five doors," says Blake, " each one opening on Paradise." The Angel of Purity was the portress who opened these doors for Jesus; the angel of the Forgiving Spirit kept them open. To His pure heart the very heavens must have throbbed and tingled with purity, all Nature and all life must have been instinct with a Divine holiness, yearning, eager, insurgent. Before His glance the veil was drawn aside from off the Unseen, disclosing " the Dweller in the Innermost," and also in " the light of setting suns " giving Him access to the shrine of an infinite overarching Conscience, whose omniscient eyes, that pierce, and search, and burn, are in every place beholding the evil and the good. His vision of God as the All-seeing and All-knowing was an overwhelming vision. Nothing, not even the least and meanest thing, was beyond that all-pervading Cognisance. God notes the sparrow's fall; He has numbered the hairs of the head (Matt. 10^{29f}). Jesus saw the world of men and things living and moving on the surface of an infinite mirror whose sensitive and conscious depths registered every deed done under the sun, and every thought men

think, every need they feel (Matt. 6^{32}). To Him the Omniscience of God was more all-pervading than the light in the atmosphere. God saw in secret (Matt. $6^{4, 6, 18}$), and saw to the end of time (Mark 13^{32}).

(*c*) The third postulate of spiritual vision is *Love*. The perfect flower of love grows only on the soil of humility and purity. And yet it is greater than either. If it is their child, it is also their father. It would be clear gain indeed were we to abandon altogether the use of the negative word "sinless," in our thought of Jesus. Concentration of purpose—that was what His sinlessness was. His was a will held from the beginning and ever and anon mightily reinforced by the Will of God, until it became a complete absorption in vocation, eliminating every impulse of self. Was He not so describing His own experience in the picture of the strong man armed defending his palace (Luke 11^{21ff})? Love was in Him, not "the expulsive power of a new affection," but the defensive power of the fortress in which He dwelt. "His sinlessness," says Hase, "consists in every moment of His life being filled with the greatest possible fullness of Divine love." "The heart that loves," says Victor Hugo, "is no longer composed of anything but what is pure. An unworthy thought can no more spring up in it than a nettle upon a glacier." Or, as the author of "Ecce Homo" puts it, "no heart is pure that is not passionate."

The expressions of this part of the inner experience of Jesus are (since love seeketh not her own) involuntary and indirect. Yet they are all the more striking and convincing in their power. His love far surpassed the mere natural affection which is the common possession of the human heart even in its morally imperfect state (Matt. 5^{46f}, Luke 6^{32ff}). Only one who Himself felt the constraint of that love which must love men while they are yet loveless could demand the same of His followers. And we see the depth of it in the burning chivalry that springs with hot words to the defence of the insignificant (Matt. 18^{6}); we see the unprecedented range of it in His passionate longing to be the protector of the multitudes from the ravening evil powers that were abroad, even as a shepherd guards His flock from wolves (Matt. 9^{36}), and in that overwhelming confession of a love that was fain to spread itself like great out-stretching wings around His beloved land (Matt. 23^{37}), yea, even in spite of the fact that in the very heart of it was still the same scorn and hate that had slain the prophets; finally, we see its uttermost fulfilment in the prayer breathed out for His enemies as they drove the nails through His hands (Luke 23^{34}). He was perfect as His Father in heaven was perfect (Matt. 5^{48}).

Such a love is the rod and flower of humility and purity. And in this union and fusing of all the three the faculty of spiritual vision is transmuted into

something rich and strange. To such a soul the inmost life of the world discloses itself as kin.

Even as a boy, this loving heart looked forth into the great heart of Nature, and saw it transfused with Love and Holiness and Divine Power. Its terror and its tenderness, its mystery and majesty, were the notes of a solemn music struck out by the Great Player's hand. The thin red flame of the oleander along the washed-out bed of the stream was to Him the pathway where the majesty of heaven's great King had passed (Matt. 6^{28}). The trackless mystery of the wind sighing through the cedar boughs (John 3^{8}), or shaking the reeds by the river (Matt. 11^{7}), was the sound of His going. The crimson sky of evening was the smile with which He made His kingly promise (Matt. 16^{2}). The fiery dawn-light was His kingly frown (Matt. 16^{3}). The rain and the sunshine were His scattered largesse (Matt. 5^{45}). And the wild life of the moorland, moving within this omnipresent Love, this intense kingly Interest, had its intimate appeal for Jesus. He saw there

> "Glory narrowing to grace
> Grace to glory magnified."

The flowers and the birds appeared to Him as fragments of God's creative joy (Matt. $6^{26, 28}$ etc). He knew the lair of the fox, and the nest of many a feathered friend (Luke 9^{58}). None of *them* was homeless in the world God made for them. The

bleat of the lost sheep was a Divine appeal to Him (Luke 15[4]). The chatter of the drab and commonplace sparrow touched a chord of mystic tenderness in His heart. He rejoiced when the hoarse and sooty raven found its appointed food (Luke 12[24]). The fascination of the heath-fires for the snake (Matt. 23[33]), the vultures wheeling over the place where the stricken beast lay dying (Matt. 24[28]), were apocalypses of Divine terror to Him. The dismal howling and gnashing of the homeless pariah in the outer darkness (Matt. 8[12], 22[13], 25[30]) haunted Him as the sound of some eternal pain. The hen gathering her brood beneath her wings (Matt. 23[37]) made Him weep He knew not why.

> "The dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

This love and reverence for all things God made and loveth, so obvious in the soul of Jesus, is the first essential in the making of a poet. And Jesus was a poet. Poetry is not rhyme, though Jesus' sentences often flow with a rhythm and music as pleasing as verse. Poetry is something greater than mere representation, something greater even than creation. Poetry is revelation. Not the poet's revelation, but God's, through him. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," said Jesus. Do not the words of Jesus, in their simplicity and beauty, their fitness and inevitableness, carry to the heart of the hearer the impression that in His soul

the great, brooding, waiting, yearning secrets of the Universe had precipitated themselves,—there unveiling themselves to human thought, and in the very act revealing the ultimate truth, that the heart of Reality is Spirit, is Personal, is Love, is God ?

To Jesus, God's omniscience is the omniscience of love. The amazing thing about it is not its extent but its intimacy. God's interest in the solitary individual,—that is the holiest fact about Jesus' God. Not His interest in human hearts that love Him only, but His tender compassionate interest in bad men also, His love of those at enmity to His will (Matt. 5^{44}). He is the Arch-peacemaker, whose true children are His imitators (Matt. 5^{9}). In His presence strife melts into silence and all discords are healed. He is the all-embracing Pity and Mercy (Matt. 9^{13}, 12^{7}). He is the Divine Gardener loving every plant in His great human garden, even the weak and the worthless with a long-suffering patience (Luke 13^{8}). He is the Super-creditor, welcoming the most hopeless of His debtors who come to Him to confess their insolvency, and cancelling the debt " with a disarming smile " (Luke 7^{42}). And in that great refrain which recurs among the parables of lost things : " There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that returneth" (Luke $15^{7,10}$), we are permitted one of the most lovely glimpses of Jesus' vision of God. As a great

interpreter of the Gospels has recently suggested,[1] Jesus seems to behold here a scene in heaven with which the only worthy comparison is the vision of creation seen by the poet who wrote the drama of Job. There, when God had finished creation He looked on all that He had made and saw that it was good. Then turning to the ministering spirits that surround His throne, God pointed downwards and said, "Look!" And the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38[7]). So here, Jesus sees in the turning back of one sinner upon earth to God the New Creation—the Rebirth, of which that far-off moment was but the prophecy and foreshadowing. And the face of the Father on the throne is wreathed in smiles as He points to earth and says again to the angels, "Look!" And they look, and break into a song of rapturous joy.

It was when the passion of Christ's selfless love fought its way out through the estranging barriers of human fear and pride and despair which He found in the social life around Him, that in the very misery and need of man He drew nearest to God's heart, and found it to be Love. Loving the whole world as Himself, He saw it transfused and illumined,—glowing with the presence of God, the infinite Father-heart; and He wakened to the awesome fact that this omnipresent Love dwelt intimately and

[1] T. R. Glover: "The Jesus of History."

personally and fully in Himself: the consummation of the great law of the self-identification of love with its object and its Eternal Source (cf. Luke 9^{48} etc.).[1]

II

These revelations of the poet-soul of Jesus illumine as nothing else does the fact that imagination is not the creation of an unreal picture-world, but the unveiling of the Truth itself. It is

> "Clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood."

And we are summoned now to pass from contemplation of the basal conditions of intuition, the humility, purity, and love of Jesus, to take further scrutiny of His mind, and to ask, if we may, by what pathway of mental activity the Master's vision winged its soaring flight from the bed-rock of these moral postulates. Can we find any clue to the reasoning processes which His mind pursued?

Of the logic of the schools, indeed, an examination of the words of Jesus yields but scanty trace; just because His was the intuitive rather than the discursive mind. His insight pierced through immediately to the conclusion which other minds have to climb to, toilsomely, step by step. His sayings are sententious sayings, brief and pregnant. He spoke in pictures; in aphorism, epigram, and paradox,[2]

[1] See Section II. Chap. I., pp. 128ff.

[2] Cf. Mark $4^{22, 24, 25}$, 10^{31}, 2^{27}, 7^{15}, $8^{35, 38}$, $9^{35, 40*}$, $12^{17, 27}$, 14^{38}; Matt. $7^{1, 7, 12}$, 12^{30*}, 22^{14}, 23^{12}; Luke 12^{48}, 16^{10}; Acts 20^{35}, etc.

not in long drawn out syllogistic trains of thought. One must not rest, however, in the hasty conclusion that there is an unbridgeable gulf fixed between these two types of mind. There is none. An aphorism is a syllogism written in short-hand. The diffused light of the extended argument is drawn to a focal point, and the truth shines in its crystal mirror like a spark of native fire. Yet behind that spark all the energy of the reasoning process lies concentrated and concealed. In the swift soaring flight of the mind of Jesus, the beating of the wings of thought is almost too rapid for observation. But here and there we do come upon passages which betray the motion of His soul's flight; and they contribute generously to the treasure store of our knowledge of His mind.[1]

They are not efforts in the region of mere intellectual abstraction. They are living and concrete. They break through the rules of strict logic. The objects of perception were to Him, not the mere stuff out of which, by comparison, contrast, inference, ideas were abstracted. They were not mere analogies and similitudes. They were sacraments,—fragments and manifestations of the Eternal Mind. Jesus, when He talked to people, concentrated His whole genius on making them really *see* things, and *hear* things, and *feel* their spiritual value and significance, even before He asked them to think things

[1] Matt. 6^{24-34}, 7^{7-11}, 7^{16-20}, 12^{3-8}, 12^{11-13}, 12^{25-30}, 15^{17-20}, 23^{17-22}.

out. Man's full humanity had, He saw, in every part of it some capacity to lead their souls upward to meet and respond to the truth His insight would unveil. He was not content merely to convince the intellect, but to move and change the soul,—to produce μετάνοια. His is not the logic of mere mental acuteness, but the logic of intense and passionate moral earnestness. The primal fact about the mind of Christ is that of a will poised and set unwaveringly in the direction of God. This living strand of volition, this pure unbending intention God-wards, runs through all His thinking. His method of heaping up questions in quick succession is an appeal to heart and conscience. The commands which He issues to our apprehension are a summons to the moral sense as well. "Consider the lilies" is more than a mere call to speculative contemplation. It is the record of a moral achievement. "The evil-hearted cannot consider the lilies."[1] Herein lies the nerve of morality in all the Master's thinking: it is "he who does the will who learns of the doctrine whether it be of God." For "the life of the world," says Tolstoy, "depends on a Will, on Someone who is striving to realise something with the life of the world, and with our

[1] "He who has been unjust to man or woman," says Mark Rutherford, "misses the full beauty of flower and falling wave." "I doubt whether such disinterested apprehension of floral beauty—so free from moralising or allegory—as that of the text: 'Consider the lilies'—can be found outside, or prior to, the Christian intelligence." Bosanquet, "History of Æsthetics," p. 129n.

lives. To understand this Will it is first of all necessary to fulfil it, to do that which is required of us."[1] It was this same intense moral concentration in the soul of Christ, which, working inwardly to up-lift His reason to the flash-point of vision, drove Him also to passionate outward action in God's world of men.

Such then, was the method of the intellect of Jesus,—the way not of the syllogism of formal thought, but of the practical life-syllogism that, informed by the good-will, lighted by conscience, and winged with emotion, swings the heart, the whole conscious personality, up to the heights of vision where it touches and communes with God.[2]

Let us take, by way of brief illustration, the most important group of His argumentations—concerning human nature and the Divine nature (Matt. 12^{12}, 10^{31}, $6^{26,30}$, Luke 12^{23}, 4^{4}, Mark $8^{36,37}$, Matt. 7^{7-11} etc.); and let us follow for a moment the movements of His mind as He seeks to unite the one with the other. The first rapid survey of the group gives us at once the justification of Jesus' method of argument *ad hominem*. The *man* to whom this argument is

[1] The rapt attention involved in the highest thought is, as Boehme points out, itself an obedience to the Will of God.

[2] In short, it is the human syllogism, in a mingled variety of forms,—*argumentum ad hominem, reductio ad absurdum, argumentum a minori ad maius*, and *arg. a fortiori*,—which is most characteristic of the reasoning of Jesus.

addressed is not man's lowest self but his noblest.[1] He lifts the soul towards perfection, or absolute value, by two great steps of thought. (*a*) He first summons the insight of reverent and sympathetic moral sanity to behold the human soul in its true value and significance; (*b*) and then He lets the liberating and uplifting power of wonder play about this high and holy fact, until it leads us into the presence of the Eternal Human Heart,—the heavenly Father.

(*a*) In order to make men see human nature as He sees it, He does not hesitate to appeal to the sense of humour in man,—that high quality and saving grace which is the handmaid of all true realism and sanity. He evokes the sense of incongruity by devising contrasts between surface and inner value. There is, indeed, a *relative* form of humour, when some object or person is so set in the light of our social orders and normal human conventions that the incongruity leaps out in "a sudden glory" of laughter. But *absolute* humour is the discovery of incongruity in our settled human ways of looking at things, when they are so set in the light of the Divine Conventions that the unreality of them is dissolved in a burst of heavenly laughter. The blunted sensibility of average commonsense has a way of slumping

[1] The abuse of this type of argument is the endeavour by cunningly devised rhetoric to enlist on the side of a certain opinion or theory all a man's worst prejudices, his basest and most easily accessible passions. That way lies Calibanism:

"As it likes me each time I do. So He!"

things together in a morass of indifference where nothing appears much better or much worse than anything else. And even human nature suffers at its hands. In the grey atmosphere of prosaic experience ultimate significance is blurred out of human life. But Christ confronts this worldly cynicism, which is often only half conscious of itself,[1] with the stimulus of a genial, tender irony. Sheep, and sparrows, and grass, and men—we are apt to congratulate ourselves on our superiority when we have come to the conclusion that they are all equally among earth's fleeting and transient phenomena. What is one? Who cares? "Out of the earth man cometh, and into the earth he goes." A sheep! Something to be smiled at, says superior commonsense. But pity is a nobler quality than commonsense. And when Pity sets the life of a sheep above the sanctity of the Sabbath Law (Matt. 12^{11}) man is seeing this living thing more nearly as God sees it. The grass of the field! Symbol of frailty and brevity to the too familiar eyes of man. But rightly seen the grass is a miracle, a sacrament. There is more majesty in it than all the pomp and pageantry of palaces (Matt. 6^{30}). The sparrow! Commonplace,—cheap—two for a farthing in any market-place (Matt. 10^{29}). Amid a myriad flight of sparrows what is one? One

[1] Jesus' irony deepens into sarcasm (Matt. 7^{3}) when He deals with cynicism which has soured into censoriousness (7^{1}),—deepens into something sterner still when cynicism hardens into contempt (5^{22}).

sparrow! What a marvellous creation it is! With what infinite patience has its delicate and complex organism been moulded! An expense of creative care lavished on the insignificant,—God attends the funeral obsequies of each one! says Jesus. It is a token of the exuberance of the Divine Considerateness. And then while the Divine light from this tiny paradox still floods our eyes, comes the Master's question: Are ye not of far more value than—sparrows? (Matt. 10^{31}). With a smile He convinces us that in a world where everything is holy and significant there are degrees of value. God interested in the grass? How much more in man? (Matt. 6^{30}). And, oh yes, man is better than a sheep,—but how much better? Jesus asks (Matt. 12^{12}). Is his life merely that of the beast nibbling in the sun—one long forage for bodily food (Luke 12^{23})? Is not the true nature of his humanity seen rather in his hunger for high and holy thoughts on which to feed his soul (Luke 4^{4})? And he who can thus show sympathy with the lower creation,—he who has the capacity to discern these contrasts in thought,—is *he* not the manifestation of a deeper and tenderer Divine Considerateness? Standing out into the heavenly light which shines through this cleft of incongruity, man's life becomes transfigured with eternal value. When Pascal said that man is a reed—the weakest thing in nature; but that he is a thinking reed and therefore of more abiding worth than a universe of

dead matter which may crush him, he was but faintly re-echoing the sublime moral insight of Jesus: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8^{36f}) Jesus makes us see all things, and chiefest of all the soul of man, in God. Man may will himself out of the life of God, but nothing else can Death cannot God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

(*b*) And here we arrive at the second upward movement in Christ's ladder of thought. Taking His stand on the eternal significance of human life, He seizes on the holiest fact within human life—the love which belongs to parenthood—and strenuously claims that God cannot be less noble than that fact in its purest perfection. "What man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? . . . If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father . . . ?" (Matt. $7^{9, 11}$) "Is there anything in this changing world of ours," He seems to say, "that lasts so long as father-love, mother-love? Will the long, weary leagues of shame that lie between him and the 'far country' wear out an earthly parent's love for his prodigal?" (Luke 15^{20}). Stronger than the craving for life itself is the love of parenthood. "Being evil"? Yes, He knew the failings and follies of parents, how laziness sets limits to kindness, and offers the lamest

excuses for itself (Luke 11[7]) ; just as He saw with candid eyes the grave faults that marred human nature in general (Mark 4[6], Matt. 21[28], 23[3], Luke 12[47], 13[25]). Yet this instinct of parenthood survives them all. If down amid the squalor and sordidness of our broken humanity, this pure and holy thing can still live on, uncrushed, unquenched, surely it points to a Source whose character is holy. The mighty Creative Power, the Fountain of life, cannot be less, must be far more noble than the noblest fact to which it has given birth. Thus He argues from the less to the greater. And then, with His triumphant *a fortiori,* He asserts an infinite interest and tenderness towards human life in the being of God. He is "the heavenly Father" pouring Himself out endlessly in sacrifice for men.

"Anthropomorphism!" the doubter says "The most pathetic instance of the 'pathetic fallacy.'" The pious agnostic, living in a "beautiful twilight of sad and delicate reverence," is afraid that such an argument belittles God ; while the pessimist agnostic, living under a grey sky on the wind-swept plain of disillusionment, fears that thereby we make too much of Him. The defect of both these attitudes is much the same. They have failed to realise the true significance of the human spirit. The sceptic is he whose will in its primal poise and direction has been drawn away from the inner Godward world of spiritual values by the lure of the external world of

dead material mechanism; and the tendency of whose thought is downwards into the region where all things are seen to break up into a lifeless multiplicity, where therefore holy and horrible are at last nothing. From man who goes the way of all flesh he can argue only towards an infinite chaotic Night of Death as the ultimate principle and goal of things. While the other type of critic, the agnostic, in whom the hankering after the eternity which God has set in the heart has not been wholly quenched, and who therefore still demands an ordered universe for his intellectual satisfaction, can yet see nothing in the highest microcosmos within the world—the human soul—at all worthy to be a similitude of God. God is too vast, awful, and unknowable, he says, that we should dare to think of Him as made in the likeness of man.

But the crux of every Idealism, of every spiritual interpretation of the world, lies here. In observing the processes of the world's growth we must explain them by that which they have become. We must take the highest fact we know, human self-consciousness, and say "*that* is what the crude beginnings really were or else we have no explanation." The highest manifestations of the activity of the Universe are those which are likest to the essential nature of the whole. The character of the Eternal Being must be all that is best and deepest in the human soul, without its limitations. The human analogy is not

in-valid unless thought itself be in-valid. Than Jesus' name "Our Father" no more satisfying, no truer name for God has yet been found, or can be found, till we have transcended human finitude.

Nevertheless it remains to be added now that since all this effort of the mind reaching out towards God lies still within the circle of ratiocinative thought, Jesus' argument from human worth and human fatherhood to God remains but the grand hypothesis of reason. For the very fact of eternal human worth, nay, the true significance of the meaner things—grass, and sheep, and sparrows—with which it is contrasted,—do not these already assume a Spiritual Universe, an Infinite Mind, for whom they have worth? Vast and grandiose though the circle of idealising thought may become, it nevertheless remains a circle, and mere reason does not transcend it.

But the next step in our enquiry now opens out before us. For as finite Reason, nurtured on the holy soil of Humility, Purity, and Love, unfolds and spreads its branches out towards the confines of Universal Reason, it begins to feel something of the warmth and life and radiance of the Infinite Experience, the mind of the Eternal Spirit. Here is the region where intuitive vision begins,—the soul's last leap home from its long search to the breast of God. Reason asks and receives, she seeks and finds, but at the last she stands without, knocking

at a closed door. It is then that Revelation comes from within and opens the door unto her.

III

The Gospel story yields a rich harvest of evidence as to such an experience of God in the life of Jesus.[1]

In a series of immortal pictures the Master describes the coming of "the Kingdom"—the dawning of such an experience of discovery, or vision, in a soul. And here again we are struck with the sanity and naturalness of it all. It is foolish and futile, He urges, to look for paroxysms, upheavals, miraculous interventions, "signs." The Kingdom comes flooding in as gently and simply and calmly as daylight, or as the springing of the green life from the breast of the world. The Kingdom is nothing that descends upon the world either by the way of heavenly interference, or through revolutionary changes in the external conditions of life. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . it is *within* you" (Luke 17^{20f}).[2] Men wait and watch with longing for signs of it, scanning the sky, scrutinising the changing conditions of society. But the Kingdom will be no miraculous response

[1] The direct confessions of God-consciousness have already (Chapter I Appendix) been referred to.

[2] On the whole, this is the most likely translation; for it is to be noted that "observation" is not a word referring merely or primarily to dazzling spectacular display: it means "close scrutiny,"—diagnosis of conditions. The Kingdom is an inward process, potentially present in every man, even a Pharisee.

from without to such longing and seeking of men. That very longing and eager expectancy is itself the green blade of the Kingdom springing in the heart (Mark 4^{26f}). Day succeeds day, each finding the same wonders, hopes, forward-lookings in the heart. They grow and change; the blade gives place to the ear, until at length a ray of sunshine pierces the dull haze of familiarity and hope deferred, and before our amazed eyes the ripe field lies outspread, the Kingdom is come!

How does it begin? Oh, it may be a very tiny thing, a mere mustard seed, a brief waking of the better self, a breath of awe, a gush of holy joy, a faint impulse of faith—present to the soul for a moment, then hidden in the garden of memory. Yet, because it was a living thing, it is destined to germinate and become a mighty tree of faith, visited by winged fancies from the spiritual world, and melodious with voices of rapture and praise (Matt. 13^{31f}).—Or it may begin in some hidden but constant unrest, some ferment of soul, some heartache, or mental anguish. Not till the great testing occasion, the high summons to action, comes do we realise what has been taking place: "the Kingdom" has leavened the whole soul (Matt. 13^{33}).

Yet, for all its naturalness, like living growth, the coming of the Kingdom is not without its elements and moments of sudden and glad surprise. Through simple and commonplace things in the

monotonous field of life, the wonder of the Kingdom breaks on one at times, like a hid treasure suddenly disclosed. And there follows a rapid transvaluation of all values in one's experience. Seen by the soul thus infinitely and unexpectedly enriched, every common bush becomes aflame with God. One thing is necessary at such a moment to make the vision of the Kingdom a real and abiding possession, —one high resolve of self-abandonment, the sacrifice of every material interest in a glad yielding of the soul to the reality which has thus unexpectedly been unveiled (Matt. 13[44]).

Best of all is the rapture of vision which crowns the end of a long and earnest search for the Highest. Only the eyes that have grown expert in spiritual values, through the lesser triumphs of the pilgrimage of spiritual discovery, can fully appreciate the pricelessness of the pearl of the Kingdom when one day, suddenly, the seeker lights on it. That it is possible for this thing of infinite depth, and richness, and mystery, the Kingdom of God, to become the possession of a finite soul,—that to man is offered the privilege of identifying his will with the Divine Wil and of fulfilling a fragment of the Infinite Purpose, —why, all the experience of a life-time is not too big a price to pay for it. And if we would enter into full possession, the heroic sacrificial resolve must be taken, and the price paid (Matt. 13[45f]).

It cannot be but that Jesus is indirectly revealing

fragments and aspects of His own spiritual experience in these parables. To a soul born for the Beatific Vision it must in large part have disclosed itself simply and naturally. There was no definite moment when it could be said to have begun. Yet there must have been many a rare and rich outflashing of the hidden light along the way; moments of rushing emotion when the Truth seized Him and bound Him in its golden fetters a willing and exultant slave; moments when the land-locked waters of His human soul felt the full tumult and flood of the incoming tide, and the breath of the great Deep —the "murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea." And it is certain that when these moments came to Him in His hidden years, He Himself always leapt with rejoicing to answer the imperious summons of the vision, abandoning Himself absolutely to the leading and direction of each fresh disclosure of the mind and will of God (Matt. 6^{33}). That is why, when we see Him in the years of His ministry, the sense of the Presence of God has already become second nature to Him, His abiding possession. The high moments of vision that come to Him now are always something beyond the mere repetition of the experience of union with God; they are the rapturous achieving of some new vista in the landscape of the Eternal Mind,—the discovery, for example, at the Baptism that *He* is called to be the chief Servant in the Kingdom of God, and the final

unveiling, at the Transfiguration, of God's Purpose for the Servant—the Cross set in the light of victory beyond. They were ecstasies in which His spirit was moving out towards the universalising of the treasure of the Kingdom, His own sublime consciousness of God.

And here we reach a point at which the fact of the inwardness of the Kingdom shows its kinship with the truth that lies behind the apocalyptic dreams of His day. When the sudden glory of the Kingdom rushes before the inward eye of Jesus, not only is His whole soul full of light, but the whole heavens are illumined from horizon to horizon as with a lightning flash (Luke 17^{24}). What insuperable obstacle is there, after all, to prevent the Kingdom coming swiftly over all the world? For Him, the veil that hides it from the world has worn so thin and so diaphanous. When, in this soul and the next, He saw the green buds of the new life coming, was it not certain that the Summer was at hand. (Mark 13^{28})? It is always so, when a great soul is in the grasp of an Eternal Truth: he is under the urge of its imminence. It might be, yes, it might be realised—soon, soon. It is the tragedy of human sinfulness, that while the Kingdom is surging up against the doors of humanity, and is ever straining to break in and flood the world with wonder, the hour is postponed, and postponed, and postponed. Yet it is a truth of history, that ever and anon, when

the Dream seems to have sunk far down behind the obliterating night of black disaster, the saints fling themselves, in a last deed of hope, simply upon God's Power, and through their eager, prayerful waiting the Spirit comes to breathe upon the dry bones and requicken the world. There is no incongruity therefore between Christ's spiritual vision of the "Kingdom within," and such an ecstatic moment as that which came to Him when the disciples returned with joyful tales of the success of their preaching. He rejoiced in spirit. And when they wondered at His radiance, He said, "I beheld Satan fallen from heaven like lightning" (Luke 10^{18}). At the level of Christ's exaltation of spirit what seems a contradiction to us disappears. His use of apocalyptic imagery betokens no real wavering of outlook in His mind.

Yes, it is clear, from word and incident, that Jesus experienced many an ecstatic moment when the pure flame of His mind so illumined the page of finitude that the Unseen became vividly present to His consciousness; nay, more, that, in the intense and eager mental activity of His pure, humble, loving soul, He lived constantly in that high altitude which breathes an abiding communion with God. And one of the conditions for complete entrance into possession of the vision has already emerged,—that of an absolute and decisive surrender of will.

But the very principle or *law of intuitive vision*

has been laid down by Jesus with wonderful precision and pregnancy, in a word which we can with perfect assurance employ in our interpretation of His own experience :

" The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be darkened. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great will the darkness (in the whole outlook of the soul) then be ! " (Matt. 6^{22}).

Here is disclosed to us the Master's conviction that the impression which the outer world makes on the vision depends altogether upon the moral poise of the mind and heart that direct the eye from within. For the eye is not merely a window, but itself a " light." And it is the heart that generates the radiant energy which becomes luminous in the chamber of the eye. If confirmation of this were needed, we find it (negatively) in a word from the great pericope about outward and inward purity : " From within," He there says, " out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, . . . an evil eye " (Mark 7^{22}). And we find it (positively) in the Sixth Beatitude.

It is the familiar psychological law of perception. When the light from without, with its image of the world, enters the eye, it inevitably takes on the colours and qualities of the inner light. Now the true quality of that inner light is singleness, not

darkness, and not dividedness or distraction. The heart must let go the grasp of the false appearance of the material world—absolutely (Matt. 6[19ff]); must be devoted to nothing else but the unseen heavenly treasure, if a man would really see the Divine light that streams through life.

Is not this a disclosure of the Master's own experience? Are we not here brought face to face with a soul directed from the beginning Godwards, a complete repudiation of the evil glamour of things degraded to be ministers of sense, an utter, a continuous, and—in the great decisive hours of vision and consecration—a passionate abandonment and surrender of will to the majestic claim of the Unseen, the realm and reign of God? The "single[1] eye," "the whole body full of light," and consequently the whole outlook of the soul on life Divinely luminous,—who could have spoken the great word but He in whose experience it was all supremely true? It is just the description, on its more subjective side, of His profound experience of the presence of God. Translating it into the language of private confession, we can hear Him say, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast given 'the single heart' to me. For in its clear, pure light mine eyes behold the true Light of Life which shines through all things. My whole being

[1] The word means simple, naïve, natural; "generous" (Moffatt); without self-consciousness, selfless.

tingles and glows in response to it. The beauty—the wonder of the world, which greets me through eye-gate and ear-gate and all the portals of the senses, is Thy great heart confiding its joy and its sorrow and its immortal hope to me,—Thyself writing upon the veil which hangs between me and Thy face. And in the human world—the movements of men and nations, the great story of my race, the deep-heart-hunger of this present time—my will which is Thine without one reservation to command can catch, as in a glass reflected, great gleams and splendours of Thy blessed purpose, Thy profound design. Yea, through all lofty aspirations and all sacred thoughts which visit me, creep in the whispers of Thy Holy Spirit to my soul. Everywhere manifest, without me and within, Thou art the only living and abiding One, Life of my life, the End of all my seeking, the only Truth, the only Joy."—A shudder runs through His soul, as He utters the closing words of the saying: "the darkness—how great!"—"Life *without* the sense of the presence of God? How dreadful! I cannot look upon the thought! To me—it would be death."

But if spiritual vision is thus so simple and natural, if it lies within the realm of rational and moral human activity, if it is not the prerogative of beings endowed with a faculty of spiritual perception which is *sui generis*, and if this is the true, normal, or God-intended experience of man—a life lived in intimate and

unbroken fellowship with the Eternal Friend,—why, then, it may be asked, is human life as we know it such a tragic alienation and exile from God? What are the estranging veils which Jesus has lifted? What is the "step or two of dubious twilight" He has crossed, while His fellow-men move in the shadows, haunted with the sense of the absence of God?

We turn to the reverse side of the working of this law of vision which Jesus has discovered. There are two main tendencies of the human soul—the tendency of "wonder," the instinct for transcendence, which sets the soul towards God; and the tendency of acceptance, the instinct to clutch at and tightly grasp this present world which seems so concrete and real. If the soul is held in this thraldom, this devotion to Mammon (to give it Jesus' name),—if this evil glamour is the light that is kindled by the heart in the chamber of the eye, then the impression which the outer world will make on the soul will be, not the true light, but something distorted and full of gloom, a total absence of spiritual vision—darkness. This is how Christ explains men's failure to realise the presence of God. But He recognises here also another possible experience of the soul,—a conflict between the two tendencies: the desire for God and the things of the Spirit active and clamant within, yet also the sore reluctance to let go the grasp on "this warm kind world." And the

light kindled in the chamber of the eye by this inner conflict is the light of dividedness, distraction. To hold both outlooks on life is an impossible situation, Jesus says. The light of the divided mind fades slowly out, and the end is darkness. " Ye cannot serve God *and* Mammon " (Matt. 6[24]).

Jesus was the world's true realist. His was not the outlook on life obsessed by the stubborn obtrusiveness of mere lifeless multiplicity. He steadily refused to see all things against that sinister background of the transient and fleeting ; refused to be absorbed by the perpetual process of passing downwards to disintegration in the dust, the apparently ultimate ground and basis upon which all things rest. He saw all things against the background of the Unseen Reality, the Ordered Whole, which is the Spiritual World ; saw sorrow and death as elements within this larger Unity : all the harsh discord and strife of life moving out to be lost in its nobler symphony ; and the true destiny of human souls to be the crown of abidingness in the eternal Life of the Spirit.

Materialism in this wider sense—the grey and sterile view of life which modern thought has chosen to call Realism—Jesus plainly declares to be *moral illusion, a dark shadow flung up from the soul into the gateway of vision, and projected by the mind into the outer world, making the prospect seen by us to be unreality and dream.* Thus for Him *maya* was not

sense-*maya*, but moral *maya*. It is not to be confused with that Eastern despair of the natural sense-perception, the fatal doubt that the soul has been pent up in a prison-house of flesh deliberately built to deceive. That has no meaning for Him. The estrangement of the soul from God and the Spiritual World is entirely due to this veil flung across the vision of the soul from within,—the moral miasma exhaled by the corrupt mind or heart, clouding and deceiving the senses.[1]

IV

It will help towards a fuller view of the methods and processes of the intuitive soul of Jesus, if we now for a little longer watch His spiritual energies at work upon *the great veils of moral illusion* which hang before the eyes of mortals, hiding Reality and God from them.

The evil heart—the source of all moral illusion—is, in general terms, the impulse of the Self to assert itself against the persistent pressure of the material world, the apparent self-assertion of the Cosmos. Man desires to compel the world—his world—to make *him* its centre. He wants to be master of life by making the world his flatterer and his slave. And Jesus seems to have observed two main directions in which this aim was pursued. And in each of

[1] Cf. St. Paul: "ye were alienated from God *in your minds*." Col. 1^{21}.

them the veil of moral illusion assumes a double aspect, according as the effort issued in success or failure.

(1) First in that part of life which we label the "*secular*" the struggle might result in the victory or defeat of self-assertion.

(*a*) Successful material self-assertion is *mammonism* in the more specific sense of the term (Luke 16$^{9-13}$). It is the beating down of the apparent self-assertion of the material world by winning possession of its wealth, and, through its wealth, of worldly power. Money is matter lifted into the borderland of the spiritual by a man-made figment of value. To Jesus this was one great form of the illusion which prevents man from seeing the world shot through and through with the light of the Life Divine. Earthly prosperity was, and is still, reckoned to be a proof that a man's life is under the sunshine of heaven's smile. And God is accordingly conceived after the way of life of the mammonist. Not consciously or articulately perhaps, but none the less surely God is conceived as the Absolute Self-interest. But to Jesus the successful mammonist was only the "rich fool"—because of his short-range thinking What did it all come to in the end? Death, a scattering of the amassed wealth, and a dissolution of the soul that had found its only life in the glitter and glamour of these things (Luke 16^{22f}, 12^{20f}); —"the deceitfulness of riches!" (Matt. 13^{22}). He

saw with sorrow the terrible power of this illusion on the souls within its grasp,—how hard it was for them to enter the Kingdom (Mark 10^{23}). But the only bank that never breaks is the bank where kind deeds are stored (Mark 10^{21}, cf. Luke 16^{9}) ; the only true enrichment is the enrichment got by giving (Luke 12^{21}). Kind deeds are treasured in the love of poor men's hearts. And that is something which does not pass away ; it has its place among " the everlasting habitations." For Self-sacrifice, not Self-assertion, is the true cosmic law : and Self-sacrifice is another name for God.

(*b*) But on the other hand the effort of the Self to assert itself might end in present defeat, and the despair of the self-impulse. The veil of moral illusion becomes for such a soul metamorphosed into the ravelled coil of *Care* (Matt. 6^{25-34}). Care is the materialism of the defeated. Jesus spoke not in irony but in tenderness of this form of moral illusion which hid the true reality from the harassed souls of the poor. Probably it was the spell of this illusion that came nearest His own life. Care and fear make all the world a haunted world. Man's great sad gift of power to " look before and after and pine for what is not " leads him to envy the care-free and toilless life of Nature. But it was the observation of these same simple, beautiful and holy facts of the lower creation that was the magic wand wherewith Jesus broke the evil enchantment

of Care (Matt. $6^{26,28,30}$, $10^{29\,31}$)[1]. Could the joyous wheeling on tireless wing or the rapturous song of the birds be the creation of the bony fingers of the grim skeleton Care? Was it Care grubbing in the dead brown earth, that found the substance from which was woven the lily's robe that outshone all the glory of Solomon? Nay, but He saw that the same steadfastness and reliability of God, on which the joy of the lower creation rested, belonged also to the higher world of moral action in a more personal and intimate degree. The same faithfulness that fed the birds, and clothed the homely, short-lived grass, and marked the sparrow's fall; the same faithfulness whose Summers always kept the promise of the bursting fig-tree buds (Matt. 24^{32}) reigned also in an enhanced form throughout the spiritual realm. To Him the imminence of the Kingdom was as sure as the coming of Summer. He saw it. It was just at hand. It stood knocking at the doors of men. The moments of the unknown future as they came to us one by one were moments out of God's Eternity. Over-anxiety about to-morrow meant doubt if God could be in to-morrow. To Jesus God was already in to-morrow (Matt. 6^{34}). No new day's dawning ever brought Him a step nearer the edge of the love of God. Nay, even the evil that men did could not put them beyond the range of God's

[1] Cf. J. A. Picton: "The Religion of Jesus" p. 65; Ralph Hodgson: Poems p. 6.

impartial magnanimity (Matt. 5^{45}). Jesus had Himself tested the life that is lived from hand to mouth. He knew that God never strove to lift His children out of that day-by-day dependence (Matt. 6^{11}). But God never disappointed man's simple confidence; why should He be expected to pander to his suspicion and fear? When one had given up striving for anything beyond the homely and sufficient measureful, learning instead the way of generous sharing, one found that it was always good measure, pressed down, shaken together, heaped up and running over (Luke 6^{38}). When Jesus stepped out from behind those false and artificial walls, which men, haunted by the ghosts of Care and Fear, sought to build against the unknown to-morrow, it was like shaking off the fetters of a humiliating captivity and stepping out into freedom. "Filled with laughter was His mouth, His tongue with melody." He found that it is poverty of spirit—the quenching of the will to possess—that really enters into the possession of all things in God (Matt. $5^{3,5}$). He too could have said, "Naught I have, naught I am, naught I lack." Absolute abandonment of self to the reliability of God—how it emancipates the mind, the heart, the soul! It is like waking into God's own dawn out of a sleep harassed by evil dreams[1]. Into the freedom following the entire letting go of everything less

[1] Cf. Spenser: "Faërie Queene": Bk. iv. Canto v. 44.

than God comes flooding with fresh glory the vision of the all-pervading presence of the Father.

(2) But passing up from the "secular" aspect of life into the higher life which consciously relates itself to God, we find that Jesus saw here also the same fatal tendency to project an inner illusion into the life of the world. The impulse to spiritual self-assertion produces the illusion of a vast external law-creating, law-imposing Power pervading all things,—the seeming Self-assertion of an almost impersonal Cosmic Consciousness. And again the illusion takes a double form, according as the effort of the human spirit ends in victory or defeat.

(*a*) Successful spiritual self-assertion may be named religious *Externalism*. Jesus was familiar with it as Pharisaism (Matt. 15[3], 23[1, 25, 27, 28]). It is the tendency of the mind, building an artificial House of Precept round itself, to imagine itself victorious in its endeavour to keep the rigid rule of law. All the life of the soul is drawn off into this outer region of endless meticulosity and scrupulousness, under the vain delusion that a real harmony has been established with the Almighty Sanhedrist whom the soul has pictured God to be. It is just the old bondage to an external world reappearing on a higher plane. Pharisaism has come to be a synonym for hypocrisy to-day and as such it is universally despised. Nevertheless the man in the street does not despise the genuine Pharisee. He esteems—

from a respectful distance—his martyr-like devotion to precept. Similarly the Pharisee of Jesus' day disported himself in the approving light of social convention and public opinion (Matt. 23[5]), and imagined himself to be enjoying the sunshine of the Divine approval. Yet this reckoning of religion as duty, and nothing else, Jesus says is an abomination to God. God knows the heart,—knows that this belief in oneself as perfectly able to achieve the righteousness worthy to walk with the measureless Divine Holiness is an utter failure to realise what He is (Luke 16[15]). God is Spirit, a boundless holy Energy wistfully desirous to put Himself at the disposal of human souls. God is not the Divine Exactor; He is the great Self-spender. True religion is the unreserved opening of the heart to receive.

This was the terrible veil of *religious illusion* which confronted Jesus in all His efforts to bring God back into human life. And in the methods by which He summoned men back to a real sense of God we may discern the pathway which His own soul pursued. Ever since the Nazareth synagogue of His early days He had been aware of this darkened and oppressive atmosphere. By sarcasm, irony, anger blazing out of a pure heart filled with an infinite awe of the majestic Holiness of God, He scorched and shrivelled up this garment of illusion in which the Pharisee had wrapped himself. It was the activity of an intense inner sincerity laying

bare the conscience to the reality of the omnipresent Holiness. He demanded that men should ease their waking attention from its concentration on the surface waters of the soul, and return into the still deeps where all the eternal hungers and longings are. And in that secret inner place, long neglected by a religion which had gone so tragically astray, they would discover again that God, the deserted God, was waiting with both hands full of spiritual treasure.

Public self-abasement (Matt. 6[16]) ? Nay, the true abasement of the soul was not achieved by the sackcloth robe, the unwashed face, the ash-besprinkled hair. That way led to the most terrible insincerity and sham. It was done, consciously or unconsciously, to win the approval of public opinion. But in the higher reaches of the life of the soul the voice of the people is never the voice of God ; nor public opinion the ultimate judge of the world. The true way of sincere self-humbling to which God made His intimate tender approach lay in the deliberate avoidance of the eyes of social convention, in the hiding of the heart's sorrow behind a natural outward demeanour (Matt. 6[17, 18]), and a laying of it bare in the inner recesses of the soul. It was there only that the soul was able to look up at length into the unveiled eyes of the Father, and find in them all the offered wealth of His benignity, His tender, healing intimacy. Is there no hint of the Master's own experience here ? He did not know the pain

of guilt, the hankering of remorse ; but He knew the pain that love suffers in the grief and misery of loved ones, knew the slow probing of that sword of sorrow which was one day to pierce through His soul. Surely for Him too the compensation of the Father's healing presence was found in that inward contemplation where the Divine compassion draws near. While He was musing, the fire burned and the flame leapt up—the mystic light of the holy assurance : " He knoweth the way that I take."

Ostentatious charities (Matt. 6[2]) ? Nay, the reward of the Divine approval on human kindliness was not to be found in the fawning and flattery that washed up to the door of the self-advertising almsgiver. It was met in the furtive deed, the kindness done by stealth, the kindness so sincere as not to seek even for the reward of *self*-approval (Matt. 6[3]), the generous impulse of the right hand that did not crave to hear the " Well done " of the left. There in the self-concealing disinterestedness of true generosity the consciousness of the Father's nearness breaks over the soul. There in that secret hour when the grateful eyes of pain and want look up into the eyes of pity, we behold the Face of the unseen God in whom we live and move and have our being looking out for a moment into human life, transfiguring with Divine glory the kindly deed, saying more eloquently than words : " In thee I am well pleased " (Matt. 6[4]). That is a clear record

of the Master's own experience. Many a time in the secluded life of Nazareth He had found it so. In deeds of neighbourly kindness and pity He had often found Himself

> "So near to the great warm heart of God,
> That He almost seemed to feel it beat."

The thrill of emotion too deep for words, which passed between giver and receiver was the touch of the hand of the Divine Intimacy, the glimpse of Him who sees in secret—God's reward.

(*b*) But this externalism in the higher life of the soul has its reverse side also. It might not be crowned with the delusive success of Pharisaism; it might suffer defeat. The apparent self-assertion of a hard, law-bound, impersonal Consciousness pervading the outer world might come up over the impotence and brokenness of the soul unable to fulfil its endless, persecuting, iron demands, and the soul lie crushed beneath the relentlessness and pitilessness of this imagined, cold, external penalism of the world. Then the light in the chamber of the eye becomes the baleful light of suspicion, mistrust, *cynic bitterness* of soul, the cruel light of callousness. Extremes meet here, for this is the Nemesis of thorough-going Pharisaism too. The legal, precept-ridden temper, and the spirit of the litigious rebel against precept are ultimately the same. It is censoriousness that finds penal judgment as the driving force in the life of nature and of the world (Matt. 7^{2}) It is the

unforgiving temper that hides from man the forgiving heart of God (Matt. 6^{14f}, Mark $11^{25\ [26]}$, Matt. 18^{35}). Revenge and rancour are the bewitched daggers of the devil. He who grasps them is cursed by an evil spell which leads him to imagine all the world his enemy. He is obsessed by the inevitable and relentless law which runs through Nature, rewarding sin with disease, brokenness, sorrow, death. To him the inscrutable Power behind the world becomes an austere Being, reaping where He has not sown, gathering where He has not strewed (Matt. 25^{24}).

We surely get a very significant indication of the Master's own experience when we see Him insisting so constantly that the way out through this last veil of moral illusion is the way of the forgiving spirit.[1] Forgiveness is love transcending yet honouring law. It was as He walked life's lowly ways practising, not tithe-paying or precept-mongering, but mercy, forgiving His brethren their failures and offences against Himself,—forgiving them until seventy times seven (Matt. 18^{22}), seeking to take true account of all the facts, feeling the shame and pain of all the wrong, yet leaping to welcome every motion of contrition,—it

[1] The beginning of the way to the full vision of the Everlasting Mercy is, for most men, the experience of being forgiven. The one inevitably leads to the other of course. Complete penitence involves the adoption of the forgiving spirit. And the man who tries to forgive wakens more and more to the blessed reality of the Divine Forgiveness (Matt. 57). To Jesus this was the experience not of obtaining mercy, but of sympathetic fellowship with the Divine Mercy. (For a fine expression of the mystic vision of the world vouchsafed to penitence, see Masefield's "Everlasting Mercy," towards the end.)

was in this holy experience of extending pardon, that there broke over His soul like a flood and poured upon Him in ever increasing volume the vision of the down-flowing Mercy of God, a broad and sunlit stream spreading in a thousand channels through creation. The earth grew friendlier and fairer beneath His window. The hard rind of it shone with the dews of mercy. The winds whispered their burthen of pardon and peace to all the world. The gleaming waters of the valley reflected mercy. All the white and holy light of the distant heavens glistened with mercy. The ugly hallucination of nature's inexorable laws, harnessed and driven by the spirit of vengeance, was broken. Everywhere the Divine Presence disclosed itself as a Forgiving Heart. Through the gateway of spiritual vision Jesus entered the mystic fellowship of the Everlasting Mercy, and became co-partner with God.

Not that the laws on which the world is built are unreal. God's creation would fall to pieces without the strong bonds of righteousness and justice which preserve the stars from wrong, and lead all the false paths of men and nations into outer darkness. God cannot and does not undo His Holiness. It costs God an awful price of pain to forgive, He has to submit to the travail of His own Holiness in reaching down His Mercy to men. But He forgives. And it was this Man of Nazareth, whose pure and sin-pained heart yet radiated forgiveness, who alone saw this

full and awesome vision of God, felt and knew the cost of God's forgiveness, became the incarnation of God's forgiveness.

"The light of the body is the eye." Neither the gilded glamour of mammonism, nor the grey and ghostly light of care; neither the vain-glory of Pharisaism, nor the gloomy saturnine glow of bitterness, had ever any place in the eye of Jesus. His face shone with the pure radiance of single-heartedness that had joyously abandoned its grasp on material things, the transport of a sincerity that had won a secret companionship, the rapturous fellowship of the Mercy of God. His whole being was illumined. And that world of moral illusion, circling forever round a vast orb of Self-interest, whose rays could never warm the surrounding air of frosty indifference, nor penetrate the iron clouds of grim and unforgiving law, melted away like a wraith of mist before the eyes of Jesus Christ.

> "*He* saw till the sorrows of man were bye,
> And all was love and harmony,"

and there before Him lay that world that God so loved, finished and complete, the Great Artificer's Dream, the Realm of God, bathed in the still, eternal light of Divine Self-forgetfulness, Constancy, Intimacy, Mercy, Joy.

V

Passing across the frontiers of this wonder-land of vision, in unwavering obedience to its summons, and in eager aspiration pressing on to explore its deeper glories, the pilgrim soul of Jesus was led often to the Nazareth hills. There the full-orbed radiance broke, and bloomed, and blossomed at length into the ecstasy of His urgent, passionate, and adoring *prayer*.[1] These undoubtedly were for Him the moments when He shared the most intimate secrets of His Heavenly Father. Prayer for Him was the last joy of the pilgrim pressing into the Presence-chamber of the sacred shrine at the journey's end. It was the flinging of His heart wide open to receive. For Jesus Himself has often told us that only so can the richest treasures of the Divine Life be received. Not that the Father is unwilling to bestow any of His gifts. On the contrary, it is God's dearest wish to give to souls His All (Luke 12^{32}). God is enriched by giving. The greater the number of souls that waken and thrill to the Love that gives itself so utterly to them, the fuller grows the life of God. But even God is baulked by unreceptiveness in man. When the world asks not, neither seeks, nor knocks (Matt. 7^{7}), it "locks up God in bitter poverty." The currish spirit, whose main delight is to burrow in society's

[1] His later practice (Mark 1^{35}, 6^{46}, Luke 6^{12}, 9^{18}, 9^{29}, 22^{41}, cf. Hebrews 5^{7}) is sufficient proof of the habit earlier formed.

refuse heaps, has no kinship with, and therefore no power to discern, "that which is holy." God's pearls are of no use to the swinish. They are not even seen. They are simply trampled in the mire (Matt. 7^6). There is no response from on High to the reiteration of magic formulæ, the mechanical turning of a scrawled-over wheel (Matt. 6^7). Nor is there any response to the Pharisee's street-corner travesty of prayer,—except the gaping homage of the crowd. It was for that it was done. And that was his prayer's only answer,—his reward (Matt. 6^5). But when the will to seek the highest is quickened to intensest energy, constrained to strenuous and persistent prayer,—when it has come along a desolate and empty way, and through a dark night of life, and cries and knocks outside a closed door (Luke 11^5), when it makes the justice-chamber of the Universe ring with its entreaties (Luke 18^{1ff}), there it becomes possible for God to yield the holiest treasures of His heart. All things are possible to such prayer (Mark 10^{27}, 11^{22}). For the soul that can receive is the soul prepared. Only "unto him that hath shall be given" (Matt. 25^{29}).[1] So it was with Jesus. The Nazareth hill-tops were His secret chamber where the doors were shut against prying eyes. And there, as He knelt, the intimacy of God—the most sacred disclosure of the Eternal Father's

[1] This spiritual law is in no sense a contradiction of the Beatitude of the beggar—πτωχός (Matt. 5^3). The spirit of poverty is a real possession; it is he who is poor and knows it not that "hath not."

heart—became an almost unbearable joy. There, as He knelt,

> ". . . through the pang and passion of His prayer
> Leapt, with a start, the shock of His possession,
> Thrilled Him, and touched Him, and lo, God was there!"[1]

For prayer is not a passive thing. It is the highest energy of the pure and eager will. At its best, it is the fruit not of quiet contemplation but of earnest action. All true and honest work is the co-operation of man's will with the Will of God, as expressed in Nature's laws; it would be impossible without faith, —faith in the constancy of those same laws. And to all devoted doing of the Will of God in daily toil—even in the humblest earthly vocation,—there is vouchsafed some vision of the Truth. Labouring at the humble tasks of life, the sweat on His brow; entering into the dear and intimate fellowship of human joys and sorrows, weariness and pain, Jesus had become aware of God in Nature and in life,——God toiling on and on, bearing His colossal burden of the Universe, continually at work in His struggling, expectant creation. His own menial drudgery became transfigured in the unremitting labour of God. And it was finally and inevitably sublimated into articulate and passionate expression of what it ever was—identification of His will with the Will of God,—in prayer: passionate supplication for fuller vision, passionate petition that God's Will might

[1] The adaptation of the beautiful lines may be pardoned.

have its way on earth (Matt. 6[10]), and passionate intercession in which His own heart's love, out-reaching to embrace the whole wide world, felt the music and rhythmic sweep of the living waters flowing from the springs of Spirit ; until His own life merged into the Life of God, and His prayer became the very music of that Spirit-flood, rushing onward to fulfil the purposes of God. Sharing at last the highest purpose, God's holy plan and destiny for all mankind, sharing it in the uttermost surrender of His thought and will and desire, His vision reached its consummation ; He felt and knew Himself at last " the Son," and God, " His Father."

We have been looking at the experience of Jesus from the human side. We have gone up early to the gardens of Nazareth, and seen this Plant begin to spread itself in Heaven's air and sunshine. We have seen how it was planted in humility and purity and love, how its branches of thought and imagination spread forth from the stem of a surrendered and obedient will, the will of Jesus, which found its peace in God. We have seen " the celestial Rose of the Divine Beauty " unfold its petals beneath the stars, in hours of profound emotion and faith and lonely, passionate prayer,—the pure white rose of vision of the Father's face. And now at the end, when we ask ourselves what was the driving force behind this Life, we recognise that it was in every part of it a Divine energy, the immanent activity of God

Himself striving to accomplish His own perfect self-disclosure in a human soul. And every aspect of the vision was not so much something won by Jesus, as a gift Divine; not the achievement simply of a perfect moral life, but something vouchsafed and received.

For Christ's revelation of God to men is just His own experience of God,—the most wonderful experience ever realised on earth. In Him and through Him we have God's last and highest self-disclosure. In a unique intimacy God was to Christ "My Father," the Infinite One whose holiest longing was to be for men "Our Father in Heaven" (Matt. 6⁹). Jesus discovered in God a Being with "a strong sunny nature, with bright eyes that see through things and into things; with a feeling for reality and a love for every aspect of the real; with a keen, creative joy in beauty, the love of star, and bird, and child." The Being of God is the father-instinct in its absoluteness, whose endless, passionate activity is a giving of itself away.

As Jesus stooped in His humility beneath this mighty self-disclosure of God, He felt Himself the little child beneath an infinite, open sky, with a dove hovering, and a voice descending. Around Him and within Him was the Divine Spirit speaking to the world through human lips (Matt. 10²⁰, Luke 12¹², Mark 13¹¹), stretching out the finger of healing power to men through human compassion,—the ubiquitous

Spirit who sees in secret gazing from heart to heart through human eyes, and into human eyes. And He who saw the Divine Spirit in His brethren, knew that He Himself did all things by its power (Luke 4^{14}, 4^{1}, Matt. 12^{28}).

Yet the familiarity of Jesus with the Father is no light-hearted familiarity. Even to Jesus God is always the "Father *in heaven*" whose name is to be had in reverence. And this is just the voice of a child's awe for His Father deepening as He realises how infinitely great His Father is. To Jesus God's transcendence is simply the "inexhaustible more" that waits to be discovered,—not anything higher and holier than Fatherhood, but only the more and more of the rich and endless treasures of Fatherhood. He alone is the infinitely Good, the only self-originating Goodness (Mark 10^{18}), the only Holiness that cannot be assailed or tempted, nay, the Goodness whose very essence is self-expenditure, self-impartation, the Absolute Goodness which yearned in "the Son" to make His own highest self-expression within Time, the full and perfect disclosure of Himself to the world of men.

For while the uncovenanted benedictions of God in Nature perpetually envelop every human life, while the rain and the sunshine are bestowed alike upon the evil and the good in the impartial, unrepenting magnanimity of God, these are only the treasures of the outer courts of God's great House of blessing.

God waits and longs and labours for the awakening of a receptiveness in man that may admit His higher blessings. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"—with all its untold wealth and bliss. For these, it is true, we must be seekers first; the more spiritual blessings can only be bestowed on the heart that asks and seeks and knocks. Even so, these too are gifts of Heavenly Grace, and not rewards. Human receptiveness,—soul-hunger, spiritual thirst, heavenly home-sickness,—can in no wise claim to be desert. God is, indeed, the great cosmic response to finite receptivity,—eternal life to the fainting, rest to the weary, the spring of every comfort, joy, and wholesomeness that the human heart requires; and His greatest entry into the wide-flung door of Jesus' heart was in the passionate rush of interceding prayer.

Yet Grace descending does not halt at the saints. Still, in the vision of Christ, the Divine magnanimity pulses out farther and farther into the moral darkness of human finitude, and its golden beams turn into a crimson ray of forgiveness wherever they light upon a contrite heart. But it goes further still, past the realms of contrition, into the cold, dead night of impenitence, a wounded seeking love, making lost souls the object of its unwearied quest. As we follow, step by step down the ladder of pain, this descent of Grace, in Jesus' words, and deeds, and life, the more complete and perfect does the revelation of the inmost

heart of God become. In Jesus filled full with this Divine self-disclosure, Jesus spending Himself unreservedly for men, Jesus giving Himself away in His love upon the Cross of His Agony, we reach at length and touch and clasp the absolute self-forgetting, self-donating humility of God the Father.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS

Controversy has long vexed itself over the so-called problem of the sinlessness of Jesus. The logic of the conflict may be briefly stated thus. The assumption which is common to both sides is that sinlessness is a supernatural or at least an unprecedented fact. The extreme view on one side is that Jesus was sinless therefore He was supernatural. At the opposite extreme it is held that Jesus was not supernatural, and His sinlessness cannot be demonstrated. It seems to us that release from the fetters of the controversy lies in a true re-statement of the common assumption. Sinlessness is not a non-natural fact, even if there be but one perfect realisation of it in human history. Jesus' sinlessness is the moral miracle of Christendom, because His life was the only perfectly normal entrance on, and continuance in the moral life ; it is the ideal and norm of all true human development,—the unfolding of a soul steadfastly and unbrokenly within the abiding presence of the Divine.

There is no real objection to the use of the word "supernatural," or "miraculous," when properly

interpreted. A miracle is something that *to human thought* appears abnormal. It is variously defined as a deviation from, or as a suspension or foreshortening of, natural law ; or again as the operation of some higher law, the *modus operandi* of which has not as yet been brought entirely within the compass of finite intelligence. But is there not another legitimate use of the word " miraculous " ? It may surely be applied to a fact which is a deviation—a solitary deviation, let us say,—from the general case, where it is the general case itself that is abnormal.

A miracle of Virgin Birth may in the last resort be found to be, as the theologians say, entirely congruent with spiritual fact. With that question we do not concern ourselves here, save to remark that to rest the moral miracle of Jesus' sinlessness on a previous physical miracle of birth would be to rob it of moral value, to make our Lord's humanity unreal. It is surely not less honouring to our Lord to abide throughout by the method we have adopted in this enquiry of resting everything upon His own experience, rather than to have recourse to anything physical and mysterious that lay behind and beyond His experience. Jesus' sinlessness is not the less wonderful and holy, it surely becomes the more significant and precious, when it is interpreted as having taken place according to spiritual laws whose operation is possible within the realm of the finite and human. The ground of the possibility of good or evil lies in the constitution of every moral being. And Jesus' life on earth was either wholly within the moral realm, or it was not a genuine humanity.

Now it is a fact of psychological observation that the final and decisive transition from what may be called the nature-life of a human being, with all its rudiments, its promises and potencies of morality, to the life of moral freedom, or action directed from

an organised moral centre in the soul, takes place at adolescence. It is then that all the moral elements coalesce and polarise themselves into a permanent organism—conscience. What before was largely instinct and emotion becomes independent moral insight and poise of will. The human tragedy is, that when conscience at last fully awakes, and functions as a clearly recognised faculty in the soul, it is generally as a "bad conscience." Its insight has outrun its power to direct the will and control the selfish and sensuous impulses. Fear, shame, the sense of schism and estrangement, are most frequently the first hints in us of the reality of conscience. But that is not the ideal, the Divinely planned unfolding of the human soul. It would be impiety to say so. And there *have* been approximations to the ideal: cases of awakening to moral responsibility which might be compared to a mother rousing her infant from slumber with a kiss. It was so, perfectly, in the experience of Jesus (See Chap. I., p. 25f.).

Against this it has been urged (1) that there are instances recorded where Jesus betrays a sinful nature, as at the cleansing of the Temple, or in His harsh and scornful sayings, etc. But to the unbiassed mind none of the instances adduced have any real force. (2) That the Gospels are but meagre and parsimonious records—"can be read through in a morning"; how could they possibly contain all the spiritual experiences of Jesus?— But the entire spiritual outlook of Jesus, as recorded, is such as to preclude the possibility of sinful experience (unless, of course, He was an impostor, in which case He ceases to have any value or significance for mankind). His tremendous claims— of intimate communion with God (Matt. 11^{27}), of power to transmit God's forgiveness (Mark $2^{5, 10}$), of unique

authority, above Law and Temple; His entire attitude to life, the impression of His bearing so frequently witnessed to by His contemporaries in the Gospels and elsewhere, make the very possibility of sinful experience unthinkable (cf. Acts 3^{14}, 1 Pet. 2^{21}, 3^{18}, 1 John 2^{29}. 3^{7}, Heb. 4^{15}).

SECTION II

The Divine Vocation of Jesus

CHAPTER I

The Preparation for the Discovery of God's Call

A TOUCH of awe falls on the spirit of the man who has humbly and sincerely delivered a message, when some soul, Divinely apprehended by the hearing of it, comes and tells him "You were *sent* to speak that word to me."—Sent! To few men in the world's history is it given to speak that word boldly of themselves. And when it is heard, spoken with the burning sincerity of conviction by the lips of prophet or reformer, it produces a like awe in those who hear. Yet we have lived so long within the strong metaphysical walls of the confessional dogma of the Divinity of Christ, that the word on His lips has in large measure lost its mysterious *aura* for us. We have to think ourselves back to the days of His flesh, we have to become members of the unsophisticated crowd in Galilee with no preconceptions in our minds about the man, if we would recover something of the haunting suggestiveness of the reiterated phrase upon the lips of Jesus.

Merely to write down the relevant sayings in John's story would be to repeat a large part of the

Gospel. There the changes are rung with endless variations on the theme: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (6[38], 8[28]). But let us confine ourselves, as of set purpose we have been doing throughout these Lectures, to the more strongly authenticated sayings of the Synoptic Gospels. And let us first listen to them, placed almost without comment side by side.

It would possibly be a straining of language to detect this mysterious note of prophetic conviction in the word spoken in the very earliest days of the ministry—on the morning after that memorable night when He slipped stealthily away in the dark from Capernaum: "Let us go into the next towns to preach there also, for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1[38]). Yet it is worth while remembering that it was in that sense,—the sense of a Divine forthcoming—that the words laid hold on Luke: "I *must* preach the Kingdom of God in other cities also, for *therefore* am I *sent*" (Luke 4[43]). The note is unmistakable, however, in the word He spoke at the feast which Matthew made to celebrate his call: "*I came*, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2[17]). It is sounded impressively in the Sermon on the Mount; "Think you that *I am come* to destroy the Law and the Prophets? *I came* not to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5[17]). We hear it in the synagogue at Nazareth, when, calmly and

sublimely daring, He appropriates a word of ancient prophecy to Himself: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me because . . . *He hath sent me* . . ." (Luke 4^{18}). We hear it in the address to the disciples when He sent them out upon their mission pilgrimage: " . . . He that receiveth me, receiveth *Him that sent me* . . . He that despiseth me, despiseth *Him that sent me*" (Matt. 10^{40}, Luke 10^{16}). The same words are repeated towards the close of the Galilean ministry when He rebuked the twelve for their disputing about place by the acted parable of the little child (Matt. 185, Luke 9^{48}). We hear it, charged with deep feeling, in the words spoken at the end of His flight to the coasts of Tyre: "*I am* not *sent* but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 15^{24}). It echoes all along the way of the passionate pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The word in Luke (9^{56}) at the inhospitable village of Samaria, "*The Son of man is* not *come* to destroy men's lives but to save them," is probably a gloss on the MS. of that Gospel. But listen to the unutterable yearning of "*I am come* to kindle a fire on the earth, and how I would it were already burning!" (Luke 12^{49}); and to the agony and pain of this: "Think not that *I am come* to send peace on the earth. *I came* not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. 10^{34}). Listen also to the throbbing tenderness of the great word spoken at the calling of Zacchæus on the streets of Jericho:

"*The Son of man came* to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19^{10})—words which Matthew also has preserved to us at the end of the parable of the lost sheep (18^{11}). Finally, in Jerusalem, it confronts us in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, where we hear God speak through the heart of Jesus: "*I will send my beloved Son*" (Luke 20^{13}, cf. Mark 12^{6}, Matt. 21^{33}). Highest and most moving word of all, we hear it at the close of the rebuke to the ambitious sons of Zebedee: "*The Son of man came* not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10^{45}). Does there not seem to be an echo of that word in Luke's account of the last Supper: "I am among you as He that serveth" (22^{27})?

"*I came . . . . I am sent . . . . He sent me*"—the word with its breath of mystery and passion, yes, and with its lilt of joyful rapture too, rings through every lane and by-way of the Gospel story. How shall we interpret it? Whence came it to His soul? Shall we rush at once into the barren, mechanical, dogmatic logic which so confidently affirms they are revelations of the consciousness of pre-existence? That would be to escape immediately from the grasp of reality. It is, first and last, a moral consciousness that lies embedded in the utterances. Undoubtedly it soars up into the consciousness of His communion with God. But it met Him, as we shall seek to show, along the way

of His earthly experience, as man in a world of men. For the task that now lies before us is to trace this vocation-consciousness along moral and psychological pathways, both in respect of its source and its significance.

I

What then was the nature of this passion of Christ's soul which drew Him from the bench to the wilderness, the crowded city, the Cross and the grave? It is into this region of the Master's mind that a humble and reverent curiosity would lead us for a little way. And in general terms the answer to the question can at once be stated. It was a passion which arose from a deepening sense of the contrast between the experience of His own unshadowed communion with God, and the estrangement of the surrounding world of men from God. The dedication of His life to its task was the response of the God-filled soul to the wistful appeal of a humanity haunted with the sense of the absence of God.

The vocation-consciousness of Jesus is thus closely linked with the God-consciousness. The birth of the sense of vocation may be said to be a consequence of the awakening to the Presence of God in His soul. And, in the advanced stages of their unfolding, these two great poles of experience act and react on each other. Freedom for service must be preceded by

the winning of freedom from spiritual self-concern. In the perfecting of the self-scrutiny of His own heart under the light of God's Presence lies the secret of His power to lay the probing finger of unerring insight upon the wounds, exhaustion and defeat of sinful human nature. And in point of fact there is a long interval between the spiritual crisis of the boy's first visit to the Temple and the great crisis at the Baptism, when the long discipline and education in the school of life culminated, suddenly, in one overwhelming rush of discovery, and consequent acceptance, of vocation.

Indeed the very nature of this discovery was determined by the uniqueness of His consciousness of God. For the penetration of a soul into the Holy of Holies of God's heart and mind and will involves the discovery of the supreme Purpose and Plan of God for the world of men. And from such a communion with the thoughts and intentions of God it was only a step to the discovery of God's special purpose and destiny for Him on earth. His life-task must be as intimately bound up with the Purpose of God in the world as His own soul was with God's soul. To bring the fullness of God into the spiritual hunger of the world; to unveil,—nay, to be the channel of,—nay, more, actually to *be* the holy forth-flowing Love, which is the beating heart of the life and being of God,—that was His Vocation. And because the intensest fester-spot in the heart-

ache of humanity for God is where the sense of the absence of God darkens into moral impotence and guilty stain, He who would perfectly fulfil the supreme Purpose of God for men must in the end become man's Redeemer.

We would go further and say that the vocation-consciousness is just a special aspect of the God-consciousness. It is the discovery, out in the arena of moral activity and in the life of humanity, of that very Presence which He had felt around Him in the tenderness and sublimity of Nature, in the love of home, in the storied past, and in the still deeps of His own soul. Nay, it is just here, where the will —the centre of His personality—becomes luminous with vision, that the uniqueness, the aspect of aloneness, which belongs to His intimacy with God, is ultimately and completely achieved.

It is, of course, true—has been pathetically true in the history of religious experience,—that the soul dowered with the faculty of spiritual vision has not always been endowed with that moral enthusiasm which leads a man to champion a great cause or effect a mighty reform; just as there have been great reformers and philanthropists who have followed passionately the lamp Duty when vision and even faith were dim. In the one case all the spiritual energy of the soul seems concentrated in the quiet room of Contemplation. In the other case the conscience and the will—those faculties which

link a man with the outer stream of world-activity —seem to have drawn off all the energy of the soul and the house of Vision is deserted or but fitfully frequented. But when we contemplate the personality of Jesus, one of the most conspicuous features is the perfect inner preparation for the discovery of vocation, the moral build and calibre of the man. He was not only the man of unclouded spiritual vision; He was gripped and moved by the moral zeal which removes mountains of error and darkness from the world. The extraordinary impression which His presence made on men was due in large part to the *intense moral concentration*, the courage, which characterises all His activity. His was not merely the contemplative soul, but the soul of the prophet-reformer. He was not merely the Dreamer but the Hero. He was not merely the dweller on the lonely heights of vision, He was the crusader on life's broad battle-plain. His spirit can neither be measured nor judged by conventional standards,—nay, is itself a living and abiding judgment upon all the proprieties and conventions, all that is not morality but mere moral deportment. In its light every unreality and quackery and sham is exposed. And when these pose as religion,—when the cloak of sanctity is put about dead convention,—the soul in which duty burns as a passion is kindled to a white-hot flame of scathing indignation. The intense moral energy of Jesus is nowhere more clearly observed than

in that ringing note of fierce ethical intolerance which breaks out always in the face of sham. Any picture of the Christ which left this aspect out would not only be incomplete but absolutely untrue.

To this must be added another factor if we would understand aright the inner preparation of this soul for the discovery of His Divine Vocation. We would not call it His "enthusiasm for humanity," but rather His *passion for men*, as individuals. Not only was the flame lighted on the altar of duty in His soul, sending its glow of moral purpose through His will and conscience, but His heart was hot with a burning love for His brethren. Crowds aroused in Him not the mere abstract enthusiasm of the sociologist or scientific social reformer but the deep sympathy of one to whom human fellowship was a vital necessity, His very meat and drink. He was not one who counted heads; He saw souls. To Him faces were not mere studies in physiognomy; they were histories of human lives. He was so truly a man, so loved the world, that all human interests and conditions made an intense appeal to Him, drew Him into their circle. And interest awoke sympathy, sympathy deepened into pity, and compassion into the merciful will to heal, forgive, and cleanse. It was this feature about the man that so arrested Matthew the reclaimed tax-gatherer[1] that he took his diary one day, and with

[1] It will hardly be maintained that the "Logia" document contains merely *words* of Jesus, unrelieved by fragments of incident, or even occasional comment.

a thrill of strong emotion that rose clear above all his ingrained superstition for the sacred Jewish books, wrote his description of it in a word of ancient prophecy: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (8[17]). Nothing less, in Matthew's judgment, could describe that amazing sympathy that amounted to self-identification with other souls. His heart was a sensitive lyre that throbbed responsively to every song of sorrow, every dirge of need. For every deed of love He wrought "He paid out of His own soul."

And there are one or two words of His that must be noted here if we would understand this essentially missionary impulse, this passion for men which was so large a part of His vocation-consciousness. The first that we will mention is not given as an actual word of Jesus. "But when He saw the multitudes," it is said on one occasion, "He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9[36]). Was it a mere expression of the face, a shadow of sadness, a quiver of the lips that drew this, as a comment, from the evangelist?—It is surely evident that here we have a reflection of Christ's own uttered thought. Moreover it is clear that this is the record of a moment of overwhelming emotion, when, as in many another great hour, His thought clothed itself in the language and scenes of His people's sacred history. In this hour there

seems to rise before His mind one of the most heroic scenes in the Old Testament, where Michaiah the son of Imlah withstood the king and his false prophets on the eve of a disastrous campaign. Like that brave lonely soul who spoke out, and paid the price of fearlessness, He too sees all Israel scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd (1 Kings 22[17]). Why, then, is this word of His in indirect speech? Was it not because the words were spoken, not to His disciples, but to Himself, and just above the breath? Was it not because the disciples saw Him gazing at the multitude with absorbed and sorrow-laden eyes, thinking on their blind, aimless, hapless state, their religion all awry, their guides deceived and deceiving, no one to direct them on the way to God? . . . Until at last His lips moved, and there broke from them in poignant tones, trembling, low, and husky with emotion this rapt soliloquy: "Multitudes! multitudes!—fainting—scattered abroad—harassed, neglected crowds! Sheep without a shepherd,—burdened with cruel precepts,—led by blind guides who curse you!—seeking ye know not what!—waiting a Shepherd from God! . . ." It was a chord struck from a human heart by the fingers of Omniscient Pity that bends over the world, and sees, not only deep, but *all*.

Place beside that Galilean soliloquy the one spoken on the hillside of Olivet, over against the Holy City: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets

and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 2337). There is the spirit of uttermost intercession, the spirit of pitying love, the spirit of gathering, mothering, sheltering love and care. It sounds in our ears as the echo in a human soul of the brooding of the Spirit that, in the ancient record, interceded for creation upon the face of the deep in the first of days.[1] Yet for all the largeness of soul, how human it is! While He spoke, He wept.

And now we come back to the suggestion we made a moment ago that the vocation-consciousness of Jesus is just a special aspect of the God-consciousness. When these two factors of which we have now been speaking,—a will aglow with moral fervour, and a heart hot with human love,—meet in a soul all lighted with the Divine Presence; when a burning passion for men unites with a holy passion for God, every possible inner condition for the soul's discovery of Divine Vocation is present, waiting only for the authentic voice of the Call. Long and often He must have sought to discern God's will for Him upon the hill-tops about Nazareth in prayer. Though in the Gospels we are seldom permitted to enter the secret place where our Lord was wont to kneel, there

[1] It is perhaps forcing too much into the words to say: "It is the sudden disclosure of a heart forced by pain to confess that it is the Mother of mankind." Orchard: "The Necessity of Christ," p. 85.

are few things we can be surer of than the general nature of His prayer. It was not a quest out of the depths of any private emptiness or personal need,—except, of course, for fuller light where the way was yet dark. It was chiefly intercessory prayer,—supplication in which the longing for a free course for the Will of His Heavenly Father upon earth blended with and melted into petition for a Divine filling of the awful emptiness and need of man. In Him appeared "the love of humanity swallowed up in the love of God, but remaining distinct and suppliant within it." His sympathy swept the world of men within the radius of His vision when He prayed; yet wide as His yearning intercession went, the awesome sense of the Presence of God, which was His, went with it, until He saw humanity as an exiled remnant of the Life Divine, the scattered heritage of the Eternal Love; and all its sorrows, diseases, burdens, weariness becoming as it were the wistfulness of God looking into His soul through the eyes of men.

There is one revealing word in the parable of the Last Judgment which convinces us that this mystic vision of God in the needs of humanity became an element in the God-consciousness of Jesus. It is the word, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25^{35-40}). We may take it for certain that this, His own confession of self-identification with the

needy in vicarious sympathy, He Himself experienced to be the central emotion in the heart of God.[1] For the yearning of the human heart for God is an echo of the longing of God's heart for men. And as He listened with His inner ear astrain to the cry of humanity, it became to Him the reverberation of a cry from the heights,—the passionate longing of God for communion and fellowship with men.[2] As He looked into the eyes of men, bright with a great soul-hunger, He saw behind them the hungering Over-soul beckoning to Him, summoning Him, saying "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He met the Absolute One who has need of nothing, clothing Himself with human needs, making for Himself a body out of the wants of the world. In the infinite heart-ache of mankind He heard God saying, "I am hungry—feed Me; thirsty—give Me a cup of cold water; sick and in prison—visit Me; homeless—shelter Me" (cf. Matt. 25[35f]). All this clamour of want in the soul of man He realised as the pain of the Divine anguish. He heard God *praying* in the hunger of humanity,—the passion, the pity,

[1] It is surely legitimate, on the analogy of "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and He that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me," to prolong (in thought) the saying thus: "inasmuch as ye did it unto me, ye did it unto Him that sent me."

[2] There is an element of profound truth in the suggestion, that it was the final snapping of all human ties, when He hung alone upon the Cross, ringed round with dagger looks, and jeering cries, and thrusting tongues, that was in part the cause of that cry of awful desolation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (An examination of Psalm 22 confirms this.)

the love of God praying to have its agony relieved by some deed or life of love within mankind. As He looked on the need of the world He heard *God* say, "Inasmuch as you do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you do it unto Me."

And then, one day, the circle came full round; in the full discovery of His vocation He entered into the complete experience of the Divine intimacy and became the Father's only Son. When the yearning of His own prayer of intercession, stirred to the depths by that sad vision of God confronting Him through human need as He saw it finally at the Jordan, rose to a passionate prayer of self-dedication to service, that He might answer in some measure the call, He woke to the fact that that which possessed Him and impelled Him in prayer was itself an upsurge of the Spirit of God within His soul. It was the very Spirit of His Father that prayed within Him with groanings that passed beyond human utterance. "*Vidi in me Ipsum orantem!*" He might have prayed (as once His servant St. Patrick did long after). "Behold in me Thyself at prayer!" . . . "Behold in me Thine own will lifting itself in a mighty yearning that needs must break into action to answer the cry of Thy love-in-agony in the emptiness of man!" The mountain spring received the enriching benediction of God's dew for which it called; and their mingling waters flowed in one stream of holy purpose

from this altitude of prayer. Jesus "became to God what his own right hand is to a man"; He became the out-going of the Divine will in service seeking to compass the Divine heart's desire (cf. John 10^{35f}).

II

But, of course, all this did not happen as it were *in vacuo*. Along with and reacting upon the inner preparation of His soul, there was the outer preparation from the social environment into which He came. And to the story of the records we once more turn to seek for hints and suggestions of the outward facts and experiences which visited Him, and to watch again the coming of the crisis-hour when the rod of Divine destiny struck, precipitating and crystallising all this accumulated experience into a clear, sure, and inevitable consciousness of vocation.

It was by the bench and in the streets and homes and lives of Nazareth that the pure eyes of sympathy and love made exploration of the length and breadth and depth of the empty heart-ache of mankind. What was it that Jesus found to be so fundamentally wrong with the world? We shall not be in error if we state it in this way. Man finds his true life only in the fellowship of man; and if that fellowship were perfect, the presence of God would

have become the most patent fact in human life. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God," says John; and in another place, "He that loveth his brother dwelleth in the Light." In other words, he who has learned the true secret of fellowship and intercourse with his fellowmen has won his way up and out into the light which is the consciousness of the presence of God. As an old mystic has put it, "God is the place where spirits blend." Now the measure of the world's wrong was for Jesus the measure of the distance mankind had fallen short of that spiritual ideal, and wandered in the dark. The dark to Him was just the estrangement of the soul from God.

And, in the first place, those eyes that pity purged saw deep into the gloomy tangle of *social disruption* between class and mass, which was one great barrier separating both from God. We find Christ's vision of this gulf—a vision charged with emotion as well as insight—in the parabolic pictures that drop from His lips. And many of these are laden with reminiscence of Galilee,—may we not say, of Nazareth? There are one or two stories, indeed, which are not parables in the ordinary acceptation of the term,—not a page in which the heavenly drama is disguised in the home-spun robes of earth, but a page of earthly drama succeeded by a page of heavenly drama,—the stories, *e.g.*, of the Rich Fool (Luke 12^{16}), and of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16^{19}). These are surely

actual incidents which had come under the observation of the Master, and lifted Him on a wave of emotion to behold the concurrent action moving to an end, behind the veil.[1] This must have been a familiar sight to Him in Nazareth—Dives clothed in purple and fine linen, the fountain of compassion utterly dried up in his heart, and Lazarus lying at his gate, his foul sores mutely beseeching the piteous touch of healing, and finding it only in the tongue of the passing pariah. Where the spring of human pity is choked, the capacity for the reception of the Divine mercy is dead. And the fate of such a soul is the unslaked thirst of his awakened spiritual need, as he gazes across the great gulf fixed,—beyond. That is eternity's counterpart of the social cleft on earth. Or perhaps, as with the Rich Fool, all his soul engrossed in the possession of his "much goods," when death takes these things from him, it takes his soul's life too. Absolutely self-centred,—absolutely God-bereft! . . . And the oppressed poor were sunk in an equal spiritual misery, for envy is just defeated covetousness. And the separation of soul from soul, which is selfish indifference on the one hand, and bitter enmity on the other, is the separation of both from God.

There was, indeed, one class of mammon-wor-

[1] The latter, indeed, is unique among the similitudes of Jesus in that a proper name is mentioned. It seems to have been told in the Peræa, sufficiently far, perhaps, from the scene of its occurrence to permit of His using an actual name.

shipper that awakened the deepest compassion of Christ,—the tax-gatherer whose very lust for wealth had made him a social and political outcast. Many a Zacchæus, son of pious parents (for the name means "Pure"), had been dragged slowly down by the clutching fingers of avarice into the pit,—had sought for a time to pay his dues to God in synagogue and Temple, but hearing perchance, in some sanctimonious prayer, that odious note of superior disdain: "God, I thank thee that I am not . . . as this publican," had given up coming to the house of God at last, and in riotous company accepted with laughter the name "black-sheep,"—laughter which was only the yearning of his soul, estranged from blessing, clothing itself in thin and pitiful disguise.[1]

The faces of the crowd that stood in the streets of Jericho, turning sullenly and resentfully toward the little publican whom they had elbowed into a tree, were to Christ a symbol of the barrier which He had long before discerned in Nazareth,—the barrier of social ostracism which separated the masses from the unworthy rich,—and both from God.

And right in the heart of this social tangle, the love-lighted eyes of the seeking Christ found the dark slough of human vice and *lust*—the most pitiful of all separations from God. The boon companion

[1] Cf. the bitter, bitter, mocking laughter, which is really wrung-out heart's blood, in Kipling's "Poor little sheep that have gone astray," the song of the gentlemen rankers shipped abroad to bury the family's disgrace.

of the publican was the harlot. Lust is not so hard a form of selfishness to pierce as spiritual pride,—Christ won His readiest response from the slaves of passion. Nevertheless it is the meanest form of selfishness. There can be no more dreadful outrage upon the temple of human personality than when one ceases to regard another individual as a soul, but degrades it to be the instrument of sensual gratification. And there is no more pathos-laden word in all the Gospel than the word "lost." It means helpless,—a wandered thing on a lonely wilderness; useless,—a piece of money rolled away into a dark and dusty corner, no longer fulfilling the end for which it was made; wasted,—all the rich, holy treasures of a human heart poured out and fouled in the morass of riotous living in the "far-country." (Doubtless many a sad strand of the Nazareth experience went to the weaving of these deathless tales, Luke 15). But deeper than all these notes which are sounded in the word "lost" lies the suggestion it conveys of a profound emotion discerned by Jesus in the heart of God *God* is the One to whom these souls are lost And in the words, "While he was yet a great way off his father saw him" (Luke 15^{20}), we get a profoundly moving glimpse of how Jesus conceived of God the Father—a great, yearning, broken heart. It was because He felt that Divine emotion throbbing behind and beneath the wretchedness of men that He was

constrained at length to say, " I am sent." So, as the years at the bench went by, the sad panorama of human wretchedness passed daily under His eyes ; and every fresh story of a soul's shame went to the building up of the burden of His heart.

But that was not all. It was in those hidden years in Nazareth that He became familiar with another dreadful barrier built between the people and their God,—the cloudy sky of a religion that had ceased to provide a way of access into the limpid depths of Godhead, and had become a separating veil, a " solid atmosphere,"—

> " the dome of one vast sepulchre
> Vaulted with all the congregated might "

of *Rabbinical tradition and precedent, priestly ritual and ceremony.* Priest and Scribe and Pharisee thus had locked the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven so that they did neither enter in themselves, nor would they suffer other men to do so. Ensnared in the maze of the many,—their tithes of mint and cummin and anise, their meticulosities of peddling precept ; rejoicing in this elaborate unreality of external forms ; disdaining the people who knew not the Law and were therefore excommunicate from God, they themselves were just as far away from the One true God, because they sought Him not in the sanctuary of the heart. In this further disruptive element in the life of the time, and in that

very part of its life where it ought least of all to be—religion, in this estrangement of priest from people because of the fading of the worship that is "in spirit and in truth" lay the most tragic aspect of the separation of them both from God. And as the eyes of the Nazareth Carpenter took it all in, the longing of His heart must have grown deep and poignant for a leader to appear to guide those sheep without a shepherd back to God.

But to this still, brooding soul, Himself at rest in the love of God, the most obvious feature of the life around Him must have been its *restlessness*. Nor was it a mere inarticulate restlessness. Upon the brow of His people's faith there had long flickered thepale light of expectation. But in the mind of the street and the market-place this holy forward-look had suffered the too frequent fate of spiritual things. It was transmuted into something gross and earthy And that debasing touch of the spirit of the age was aggravated by the rankling bitterness which is the inevitable result of a corrupt political oppression. The Anointed of God, for whose coming they were taught to look, loomed up in their distorted fancy as a political Deliverer.

And we may be sure that the muttered hopes, the passionate outbursts of fervent longing for the day, must have driven Jesus back to read, and ponder deeply as He read, the thoughts of the holy men of old who had been moved to body forth the hope in

flights of prophetic fervour.[1] But in any true reading of the spiritual experience of Jesus it must be apparent that, as He pondered over Messianic psalm and prophecy, the great light of the national hope began to shine out as something impersonal at first. It was so that the greatest of the prophets had foretold the coming era. They spoke of a coming kingdom and of a pious remnant of the race that was to be "the Servant" of the kingdom. In the dream of the Messianic *kingdom* the attention of Jesus was diverted from the longing for the *Messiah*. The restless looking for the arrival of a Promised One, to change the existing order somehow and somewhere, would have been superstition—the spirit that breeds fanaticism—if taken by itself alone. But the ideal of a kingdom, a perfect realisation of the Will of God in human life is a truly moral and spiritual longing. And it was along that path the Messianic vision must have come to Jesus.

The course of His ministry is one proof of this. The theme of His opening campaign was, "The *Kingdom* is at hand." And to the end the emphasis is on "the Kingdom" not on "the Messiah." When He refers to the past it is always the Law and the greater prophecies on which He leans, only in a very secondary sense on the cruder expectations

[1] It was these very passages in the holy books of the Hebrews, indeed, that were the special subject of study and meditation among the Hasidim,—the devout circle in which the young Jesus was brought up.

of contemporary dreamers. Sometimes it would appear, indeed, as if He held that the actual coming of Messiah in full power lay in the future—beyond the completion of His earthly task. But the clearest proof lies in the fact that the discovery of His own Divine Vocation—the waking of His soul to the conviction that *He* was called to be the chief servant of that Kingdom upon earth—came suddenly at the end of the hidden years. That is a very different thing from saying that He felt no call to labour for God through all those Nazareth days. It is utterly impossible to conceive of this God-possessed and sensitively tender heart being anything but the constant, loving, humble, helpful friend of all the poor and lowly in His circle; or that His deeds of sympathy and pity were never inspired by this ideal of the Kingdom, rounding to its perfect orb within His soul. But the very silence of the Gospels about the Nazareth years, the confidence with which they all date the beginning of His ministry from the Baptism makes it clear that the supreme call was a sudden revelation instantly obeyed.[1]

And we can point with confidence to one epochal event in the quiet round in this secluded life in Nazareth,—*the reading of the book of Daniel.* Either He had access to it for private reading, through the village Hazzan, or else a copy of it was among the

[1] Had there been a gradual awakening in Jesus' *Messiah*-consciousness, the Temptation would have preceded the Baptism.

treasured possessions of the home of the carpenter. A large part of it (2^{4b}-7) was written in Aramaic, the language of Galilee, the language of this Nazareth family, the language in which Jesus thought and spoke. And there is one hint, slight and insubstantial perhaps, yet worth a passing glance, that He not only read it—of that we have clear evidence in the sayings which definitely refer to it (Matt. 24^{15}, 26^{64})—but read it aloud and more than once in the hearing of His mother. It is generally accepted now that the Lucan account of the nativity is based partly on the reminiscences of Mary. The simple story of the shepherds, and the story of the boy's first visit to the Temple both end with almost the same words: "But Mary kept all these things (words) in her heart" (Luke $2^{19, 51}$). They are not only an obvious hint as to the source of the stories, but they could not have been written there at all unless they were an indirect echo of Mary's very words—a little way she had of ending the telling of the stories: "But *I*—kept all these matters (words) and pondered them in my heart." Now the words with which Jesus would always end the reading of this sacred book in His mother's hearing are the last words of Chapter VII—words that were bound to linger in the memory of a deep-stirred pious listener: "Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my ponderings much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter

(or word) in my heart." Anyone who has lived among pious country-folk who know their Bibles well can scarcely have failed to mark the way in which Scriptural phrases weave themselves into their everyday talk, and become mannerisms by which we can identify the speaker. Is this verse of Daniel, perchance, the source of this repeated saying on the lips of Mary?

This at least is certain, that it was chapter VII, the last written in the mother-speech of Jesus, that stirred and thrilled Him most of all. Here was a Divine light shed on the ways of God with men, here was, indeed, a religious philosophy of history. One by one He saw the great world-empires rise and pass, in the prophet's dream,—ungainly beasts which loomed large and menacing in the clouds where the winds of heaven strove above the waters of the great deep,—the winged lion of Babylon, the bear of Persia from the Northern steppes, the leopard of Media from the river jungles, and the terrible ten-horned beast of the iron teeth, the Greek Empire far-flung by the conquests of Alexander the Great. One by one they sank down huddling into the night, to be finally supplanted by the vision of the Son of Man, the noble dream of a coming Kingdom of Humanity, whose power was to be no more brute force born of the earth-spirits, but obtained direct from God upon His throne. This was the great ideal for the world that seized, and shook, and

moulded the Nazareth Dreamer's soul,—the ideal of a Human-Divine brotherhood emerging over against the misery and restlessness of estrangement from God, the tangle and discord of His day.

Was it a vain unreal dream? Why, in one form or other it has ever been the dream of all the great ones of the earth. What is the ultimate goal towards which the Divine Will is seeking to move through the evolution of Nature and the unfolding of human history? All the spiritual philosophies, from Plato to Kant and our own day, all the loftiest aspirations of the great torch-bearers of history, all the noblest visions of the world's sublimest poets answer with impressive unanimity. It is the ideal "Republic" whose archetype was fashioned in the unseen realm of "the Good." It is the "Paradiso" where the white rose blooms. It is a "Kingdom of Humanity," a "Realm of Ends," organised for the perfect realisation of each within the whole, and swayed by the Absolute "Good Will." It is a "Brotherhood of Humanity." It is "*Regnum Hominis*,"[1] "Utopia," "the New Atlantis," "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World," the "League of Nations" to preserve the peace of mankind. It is the "Society of all souls in the Absolute," "the Community of all the Loyal." It is the "city of God," "*urbs Sionis aurea*." It is the "Kingdom of Heaven." They are most of them imperfect,

[1] Sub-title of Bacon's "Novum Organum."

sometimes perhaps unconscious, copies of the prototype which in its highest, purest form was the vision of the noblest Dreamer, the holiest prophet-reformer of them all,—our Lord.

This kingdom was conceived as moving in no narrow bounds of nationality by Jesus. Not only the Book of Daniel, but also the tale of Jonah, "the finest foreign-missionary tract ever written," laid its deep impression on His soul, confirming His own wide-ranging vision. He looked for the doing of God's Will, not in Palestine alone but "on the earth" (Matt. 6^{10}). His followers were to be the salt, not of Israel, but of "the earth" (Matt. 5^{13}), the light, not of Galilee, but "of the world" (Matt. 5^{14}). And sometimes, as He looked across the coming years, He saw the many flocking from the East, the West, the North, the South, to sit down with Him in the Kingdom of His Father (Matt. 8^{11}, Luke 13^{29}).

Original, in the sense of its being a new star suddenly blazing forth in the firmament of human thought, it was not. It was long since the vast conception had begun to stir towards waking, like a giant spirit asleep in the minds of men. Here and there it had found snatches of momentary wakefulness in the great souls whose inspired insight discerned the hidden path of God in the history of their race. Jesus recognised that, and found confidence and comfort in the fact that He was bringing out of the treasure house "things old" (Matt. 13^{52}).

But He knew that He was doing more than that. He was making all things new,—nay, He was *fulfilling* the past (Matt. 5^{17}). He was shedding the false accretions of the vision, and making what was real and true stand forth in native worth and splendour. He was dropping the narrow localism, the despair and superstition of the later Apocalypse, for the vaster vision of the greater prophets,—the vision of the day when the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Is. 11^{9}). It was none other than the *Summum Bonum* (Matt. 6^{33}), God's greatest Hope and Purpose for mankind, a thing for the possession of which no price was too great to pay (Matt. 13^{44f}), an ideal which made the highest summons on the moral earnestness of men (Luke 14^{24}, etc.). It conferred an incomparable dignity on those who became its citizens (Matt. 11^{11}). And yet the "mystery," the glorious paradox, the open secret of the Kingdom, was that it was essentially gracious, a gift of God and not a human achievement (Luke 12^{32}), a gift bestowed on those who grew conscious of their need (Matt. 5^{3}), and became as little children, unreservedly flinging open their hearts to receive (Matt. 18^{4}, Mark 10^{14}, Luke 18^{16}). So vivid and warm and close lay the vision to Jesus, that to Him it was the one reality Already it was at hand, knocking eagerly, solicitously, at the doors of human life ; nay, men were bursting

across its frontiers now; it was already here, even now the germ of life eternal was sown in the soul of humanity, and its consummation in some glorious future was assured.

Into the fundamental principle of this kingdom, as conceived by Jesus, we intend to glance hereafter. Suffice it to say here that it was the emergence at last within the human conscience of the true meaning of the Eternal Law of God, which had hitherto for the most part worked in history as an austere power making for the overthrow and destruction of all that opposed it. It was the final displacement from the throne of the human mind of the false principle of self-assertion, blind pride, and brute force; and the coming alive in the soul of humanity of the only ultimate reality, the law of love. To Jesus the Kingdom of Heaven was the kingdom of true love,——Divine Love as the ground and source of human brotherhood, and the subliming and apotheosis of human love when the sons of men became true sons of God. It was a kingdom whose single law for each, from the King to the least of His subjects, was the law of loving service for the good of all.

Thus Jesus, while confronted with such a condition of moral despair in the society in which He lived and wrought, listened to the voice of ancient prophecy with its growing expectation, its cry of deepening passion for a Divine Deliverer, and interpreted and filled out the features and lineaments of

the sacred national hope for Himself. It was an ideal of life, and love, and joy in the presence of God, set with all the burning passion of His mighty heart over against the wilderness of wandering souls, the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Doubtless it took its colour partly from the rife apocalyptic fancies of His day. He was the child of His age and used the current coin of thought. But these elements must be interpreted as a Jew would naturally interpret them,—as Peter, *e.g.*, interpreted the prophecy of Joel on the morning of Pentecost, saying "This—is *that*" (Acts 2^{16ff}); and *not* according to the dull prosaic canons of the pedantic literary critic of to-day. When it is in solemn seriousness suggested that this man, who lived so close to life's brokenness, and breathed such burning moral fervour, was a mere fanatic, a lonely Essene dweller in some wilderness cave, obsessed by an apocryphal vision of Messiahship, a dream in the clouds, out of touch with all the clamour and emptiness of human life; and that, intoxicated with the madness of the dream, He at length identified Himself with it, and surrendered Himself to its service, only to prove its emptiness by flinging His life away for it at last,—forcing Himself and His dream to be broken on reality's inexorable wheel—we can only wonder with a great amazement at the folly that would thus reconstruct the mind of Christ in terms of its own doctrinairism. It is the

scientific fallacy with a vengeance, out of touch with real things, subjective to the last degree. And we feel inclined to repeat the passionate words that once dropped from the Master's lips as He argued with another set of doctrinaires: πολύ πλανᾶσθε—ye are far astray!

CHAPTER II

The Discovery and Acceptance of God's Call

I

It was to a spirit in which the sense of humanity's desperate estrangement from God had grown almost too great for endurance, to a spirit flooded with the Divine Presence, and urged by the pressure of this grand ideal of a coming Kingdom—God's supreme purpose for the world, to a spirit often wrestling in agony with the problem all night long in prayer upon the hill-tops round Nazareth, that the news came stealing swiftly up over the hills, reaching the little workshop in the quiet town, of the great repentance movement that had begun on the banks of the Jordan. We can well imagine the mounting flame of excitement in the soul of this lowly toiler when He heard the news. Faint and far-off, perchance, at first, He heard in the growing rumours that sped on the breeze the first stroke of His fated hour on the clock of Divine destiny. Stories came of the crowds (Luke 7^{29}, Matt 21^{32}) flocking down to the Jordan valley from Judæa and Jerusalem (Mark 1⁵), and of

pilgrimages from all the region of the Jordan and beyond it (Matt. 3[5]). Then pilgrims from Galilee began to go (Matt. 11[7-9], Luke 7[24ff]) and brought back tales of the rugged man with eyes aflame, that cried "Repent, repent." In this new prophet, John, the slumbering conscience of Israel had awakened—become incarnate. He was the hand of God knocking at the door of the nation's heart, terrifying self-complacency into flight, laying the national soul, naked and quivering, face to face with its moral failure to be the trustee of the blessing that was to be for all the nations of the world. Doubtless a familiar saying of the time was recalled: "If all Israel would only repent for one day the Promised Deliverer would appear." It used to be whispered only with a pious sigh. But here in the face of the onward-sweeping wave of repentance that gathered volume as it went, it would now be passed from lip to lip with expectant awe. Close by where John stood in the stream and laved the endless procession of the penitents, they could see the scene where, in the ancient story, the prophet Elijah had parted the waters of Jordan with his garment, passed over, and been taken up in the chariot of fire. Many a Pascal eve they had left the door of their homes wide open, hoping for his return. And possibly now excited groups of watchers stood and scanned the sky, fancying that at any moment he might appear along the way by which he had gone.

And still the Baptiser stood and cried "Make straight, make straight the way of the Lord." Only a universal national repentance could create the condition in which the Messiah would appear.

As Jesus listened to these tales brought back to Nazareth by the returning pilgrims, conviction must have deepened into certainty. The great God *had* made a fresh entrance into the life of the land. We have the clearest proof of this in the fact that Jesus always pointed to this movement, not to His own work, as marking the turning-point in the world's religious history (Matt. 11^{12f}, Luke 16^{16}). It had all been prophetic expectation until the days of John. But with him the Kingdom had drawn nigh, and men were violently and abruptly bursting into it. Yes, the Kingdom was at hand, at last, at last.

But still He waited. Arrangements for a journey to the scene were doubtless talked of in this religious home. Yet it seems that the decision to travel down was not an immediate decision in the mind of Jesus. The movement was far advanced before He came. We wonder why. We may be sure His reluctance did not come from any fear of the material changes that would ensue in His life in consequence of His being swept irrevocably into taking part in this religious movement. The abandonment of the lowly security of His secular calling for the high adventure of a holier task could hold no terrors for Him. He had, long ere now, committed Himself

in perfect trust to the providential care of God. The Kingdom of God and His righteousness were already His first concern. And if He felt constrained now to join in a religious movement, it would be as easy as stepping across the threshold of His home to breathe the morning air.

Nor could the reason for His delay have been the need for considering the welfare of His mother and her home. His brothers were grown to manhood now and taking their share of the family burden. Doubtless the resigning of the dear home ties must have weighed on the human heart of Him; for though the path ahead was still a shrouded way, all the instincts of His soul forewarned Him that it would surely come to this for Him, if He went to Jordan. Nevertheless, though the wrench would make His heart bleed, He was ready to lay His account with that, and follow the clear pointing of His Heavenly Father's will.[1]

No, the problem for Him in deciding to go to Jordan went deeper far than these. It was a movement of *Repentance*—this. Deeply stirred and with strong crying, men were confessing their *sins*. And the impulse that drove those pilgrim bands along the ways that led to Bethabara, the motive that was urging His mother and His brethren to go, was just the beginning of that profound emotion,

[1] That He had deeply felt the severance of the home-ties is clear from such utterances as Matt. 8^{21}f, Luke 9^{59-62}, 14^{26}; Matt. 10^{37}; Mark 10^{29}f, 3^{35}, etc.

the sense of inward discord, want, unrest. But in the God-filled soul of Jesus there was no longing for some inward satisfaction still to be attained. Was it not this that constituted His problem,—this consciousness of His own uninterrupted communion with God confronting the universal motive which was drawing the pilgrims to Jordan? It was the shyness of the "once-born" soul facing in prospect the experience of plunging into a movement of spiritual rebirth. Would it be paying due reverence to this Divine Gift of "Once-born-ness"—His God-consciousness,—if He were to thrust it into the spiritual currents of a repentance movement where haply it might be obscured? This is probably the sub-stratum of truth behind the garbled tale of the "Gospel to the Hebrews." It was no self-righteousness, morbidly self-conscious to the verge of doubting its own consistency. It was chastity of soul that made Him pause,—the impulse of a lowly filial loyalty to guard the precious gift of His Heavenly Father from contamination with the shame and darkness of the world. . . . As if upon His inner ear there fell the muffled sound of the rising swell beating the shores of the unknown sea upon which He was about to launch His barque; as if He heard in it a prophecy of the gathering storm far out upon the tides of destiny; as if, even now, He dimly saw far ahead in the future the Agony of the Garden and the shuddering hour of dereliction,

when His pure soul, obeying utterly the Will of God, was drawn down into the very depths of human misery.

Nevertheless, as soon as He became absolutely certain that God was manifesting Himself there at Jordan, He arose, silently bade farewell to home and bench and tools in Nazareth, and took His way. And when He stood in the presence of the Baptiser, heard him speak, drank in the scene in all its spiritual significance, talked, probably, to the prophet alone about His past experiences and dreams, He knew that He could not hold Himself aloof from this great movement. Here was the very threshold of the Kingdom of God around which all His holiest dreams and longings gathered. He *must* give Himself to it as a humble labourer. And He resolved to submit Himself to baptism. It was not a confessional act on His part, nor yet the adoption of a new spiritual principle or law of life. It was simply an open vow of sacramental self-dedication, body and soul, to service. Nay, more, it was the holy passion of His heart for men, profoundly moved by what He saw, deliberately laying itself alongside mankind in their need of repentance. It was the response of His will in obedience to the clear pointing of the will of God. This was the righteousness it became Him to fulfil (Matt. 3[15]).

Up till this very moment the providential veil of His own utter lowliness and humility of soul had

hung before His inner vision. Never till this hour had He dared to imagine that the promise of the Deliverer was to be fulfilled *in Him*, that the Righteous Servant was thus to be gathered into a single representative personality, a son of man. It suddenly rushed upon Him now in a blinding blaze of Divine revelation. When He stooped in the waters of baptism, when He saw the mighty prophet pause, shrink back, and in subdued, tremulous, and down-cast tones declare "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" the veil fell from His eyes. That simple act of spiritual embarrassment was the last releasing touch. God suddenly confronted Him with His own significance. This was the debt He owed to God for the high favour of the Divine intimacy. The unique experience of the perfect dawning of the presence of God in His young heart seemed to rush out of the past and coalesce with the profound vision of the coming Kingdom which had gripped His soul. "It is Thou, *Thou* who art called to be the chief servant of the Kingdom of God upon earth."[1]

"There are given to man," says Keim, "moments

[1] The suddenness of the revelation would seem almost to be a law of the religious consciousness of the great torch-bearers of the Spirit. Moses, the prophets, Luther, etc., were all apprehended suddenly and called to God-appointed service. And it is characteristic of the mind of Christ that He always waited for the clear perception of the coincidence of outward and inward tokens, as the finger of God for Him.

of Divine opportunity, furnished by Heaven itself and the Providence on High for him and for the history of the world, in which all spiritual impressions and all self-recognitions and resolves are concentrated for him, so that, carried away beyond the chequered contradictory turmoil of all outward and inward images, he surveys himself simplified as it were along with the world around him, with one clear penetrating glance; and freed from all the petty brooding of considerations which the limits of human nature and the cares of individual life force on him, pledges his word to the absolute Divine necessity laid on him that he will resolutely time his human pace to its gigantic march. That moment came for Jesus at the Jordan. There for Him all the impressions of the age were concentrated in an infinite mirrored representation such as in truth had never before been offered to Israel. On the one hand the people, the whole people as He had never before seen them assembled, in the misery of outward and inward want . . . a yearning people still,—a sigh unsatisfied. There Jesus collected Himself as never before this to a sense of His obligation, and an act of self-recognition . . . The cup of misery was full: the people had gathered themselves for the day of salvation;—that day itself was dawning; all was present, only one was lacking—the Coming Man. So Jesus seized on the belief in that destiny which fell to none, and yet to one: which

God Himself had sealed up in His birth, in order to unseal it on Jordan" ("Jesus of Nazara" II, 292.)

In such a moment of heroic consecration there was again vouchsafed to Him "the treasure of the humble." The heavens were opened over His soul. And, His mind thus liberated in the Divine vision, the Holy Spirit descended on Him as with rushing wings. In this sublime moment of the chiming of His whole will with God's, He felt the inflow of tremendous and undreamed-of power to be thenceforth at His command. He heard the clear accents of His Father's voice sealing the transaction: "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased." "Thou art my Son"—the fragment from the Second Psalm which perhaps had sounded in His soul when the growing sense of the Divine Presence had burst into ecstatic apprehension at the first visit to the Temple. And to it there is added now a note from the great "Servant" prophecies in Isaiah: "mine elect in whom my soul delighteth" (Is. 42^1). The *Son*-consciousness unites with the *servant*-consciousness: the God-consciousness merges into vocation-consciousness.[1]

This was the crucial moment of Jesus' discovery and acceptance of His Divine vocation. Then was "the Son of Man" carried on the clouds of rapture

[1] Cf. the paraphrase of the voice in the Gospel to the Hebrews: "My Son, in all the prophets I waited Thee that Thou shouldest come and that I should rest upon Thee: for Thou art my rest: Thou art my first-born Son who reignest eternally."

to the throne of God, and invested with His commission and authority (Dan. $7^{13, 14}$)[2].

"Even on the soberest conception of human history," says O. Holtzmann, "this moment is one of the greatest turning-points in the world's development." It was the moment of Divinely prepared coincidence in the unfolding of outer events with the inward ripening of Jesus' soul. "The great pivotal personalities of history," as Hase puts it, "are those in whom the tendency of their age is perfected. And if this tendency corresponds to the perfect will of God, expressed in history and in reason, the influence of such a man becomes a part of universal history."

> "When old things terminate and new commence
> One solitary great man's worth the world:
> God takes the business into His own hands
> At such a time."

II

Swiftly following upon this hour of ecstasy came a time of wrestling and of conflict. "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." The place of His retirement was "a terrible, blank land, spined with low shrubs,

[2] Richard Roberts notes a difference between this hour and the earlier crisis of the awaking to the Presence of God. "Eighteen years before it was the Son with young and hardly understanding (heart and) lips who had (recognised and) spoken of His Father. Now it is the Father, in a supreme and unmistakable way, who is owning the Son." This event is "the climax, and the issue, and the Divine sealing of that growth of Jesus' self-consciousness, which had been in progress during the eighteen years." ("Jesus, Son of man," p. 16).

from under which the adder starts . . . He saw vultures sailing, and the blue wall of Moab through the mist of evaporation from the dead Salt Sea—'smoke going up forever'—all opalescent in the unclouded light, but saw no man. He laid Himself open to the sense the desert has of being possessed, of being held and occupied by personality and power." And through that haunted and sinister atmosphere there came to Him and stood out before Him, confronting His soul, as something almost visible and palpable, the dark Mystery of Apostasy, the Spirit of the World. There in that region of stones and dead things, of death-like silences, broken only by the unmelodious cries of the wild life that makes homelessness its home, He faced the new situation which His decisive acceptance of vocation and the tremendous experience of Divine visitation had created.

It was the hour of reaction, doubtless; but not the reaction of a fall from ecstasy to exhaustion or despair. Great temptations visit the soul in the hour of exaltation as well as in the hour of the dry and empty spirit. It was no conflict or struggle of doubt regarding His discovery, but a conflict of doubt regarding His decision as to the pathway along which the great discovery was imperiously summoning Him to go. It was neither a wavering of the sense of God nor of the conviction of vocation: it was the struggle of ultimate

and final choice between the two opposing ways of fulfilling His vocation.

Christ's entrance on His vocation could not be the result of a mere vague mystical fusion of the love of His own sympathetic and compassionate heart with God's love-impulse to self-impartation. For a man of such a moral calibre as Jesus it could only be the result of a decisive and definite *acceptance*—a deliberate act of will. And that such a struggle of choice could arise in an already dedicated and surrendered soul is not only psychologically possible, but historically demonstrable in the case of Jesus. Many a word of His later ministry, echoing as they do His own experience, convinces us of this. When we hear Him declare He can recognise no kinsfolk save "whosoever doeth the will of my Father in Heaven" (reflection of a possible pre-baptismal conflict), when we hear Him translate the prayer for the realisation of God's supreme ideal for mankind—"Thy Kingdom come,"—into a fervent "Thy will be done" (reflection of the self-dedicating act at baptism), when finally we see Him borne shudderingly by His own obedience into the heart of the Divine agony, and as He faces it bracing Himself with a passionate "Not my will but Thine be done" (a reverberation of the temptation-struggle)—these are all so many signals to us, thrown up—sometimes involuntarily—out of the deeps of His own utter self-identification with the will of God. And the

last is a proof that the conflict was not between obedience and non-obedience, but between the way of obedience as seen by the human Jesus and the way of obedience revealed by the Divine Father. Even for Him, the Sinless One, the offering up of the will to God had to be a continual sacrifice.

One other general observation we would venture to make upon this dark and terrible scene. The story, including the voice heard at the baptism, is obviously a reminiscence confided by the Master to His little circle in the after days. And probably it was told after Peter's recognition of the Christ at Cæsarea Philippi. There, the response for which Jesus longed and laboured broke, by Divine gift, from a human soul at last,—an inner response of personal loyalty to the Divine Life He came to reveal, a surrender to the Spirit-Power which flowed forth as from a fountain in Christ's soul. It was a recognition rising clear above the popular earth-born craving for a necromancer, a worker of physical wonders, a national Messiah. And it assured Christ that the condition of soul had begun to be attained, however imperfectly, by the disciples, in which something of the meaning, vastness, and profundity of this temptation-experience could be grasped through word-symbols,—though it was well-nigh beyond the power of words to describe. Viewed in that light a very significant aspect of the story emerges into prominence.

When the three temptations are looked at in a single survey, it must be observed that they are concerned with suggestions of material magic, dazzling wonder, political achievement; and these are precisely the elements of the apocryphal Messianic dreams with which the religious atmosphere of the time was filled. Set over against that fact the responses of Christ. Each is a word from Israel's sacred Law (Deut. 8^{3}, 6$^{16, 13}$). They are taken from passages which follow close upon the ancient creed, the earliest religious lesson, and the daily morning prayer of His boyhood. As if in this wilderness His soul was fighting its way back from the tainted and broken waters of His people's latter-day experience, to drink of the clear and cleansing stream on the uplands of His people's fontal experience of God, where the light falls unbroken through an atmosphere more serene and pure. "Obedience to the Law," and "the Messianic hope" may be said to be the two *foci* of the Jewish religious outlook. And here in this critical hour of the experience of Jesus, obedience to the Will of God through the sacred Law wins victory over the fantastic dreamings of later Judaism, the *extravagances* of the Messianic hope. He was to be no dervish, no Mahdi, inflaming the wild fancies of popular superstition to the frenzy of revolt; but God's lowly messenger to the deepest needs of the human heart. In face of recent critical inter-

pretations of Jesus' Messianic vision, this is surely a profoundly significant fact. And closer scrutiny of the details serves but to deepen our conviction.

Shall we then draw near in deepest reverence for a moment to this scene, to listen with the inner ear astrain, as this Man, visited afresh—as the opening words of the first two temptations show—with the overwhelming consciousness of a unique Sonship with God, wrestles inwardly in this solitary place with the dark Mystery of Apostasy, the Spirit of the World? Brokenly and obscurely, for our ears are dull, we catch an echo of the low and fervent words that break spasmodic from His lips in the soliloquy of the struggle (or shall we call it the argument of two opposing personal forces?).

"Son of God! I am the Son of God, owned as such by my Father once again!" The words were singing in His heart through the long rapture so profound that bodily needs were transcended and forgot.

"Oh, this measureless Power . . . made mine in the waters of Jordan! Yet not for myself, but that I might give it to the *world*. . . . The world that so needs God! The world that calls! . . . "

A momentary silence falls, then with a weary sigh He speaks again.

"I am anhungered. . . . Dawns and sunsets —how many!—have passed me unawares. . .

The Son of God! And the Father hath put all things into my hands." . . . *"Make these stones bread!"*

It came like a voice from without, a distant murmur falling on His ear,—the voice of the calling World, the world that God desired, the multitude for whom this Power had been given to Him in trust. To bring in the Kingdom of God to such a world as this must surely mean to banish every kind of want from men. . . . But the sound had in it the dull clamour of sense, and there was an awful vacantness in that sea of upturned faces seen in waking dream. "Who is this?" they question. "If He be the Son of God, let Him give material proof to us. What are His fine inner assurances of Divine authority to us? We starve. If He be our Deliverer, let Him stay our bodily hunger; let Him make bread of stones!"

There is a moment of irresolution, as the murmur dies away. Then the single thread of silver speech flows on again.

"Build the Kingdom of my Father in the world by pandering to mere physical craving in myself or others? Refuse to taste the pain and finitude of human life? Listen, perchance, some day, to the voice of prudence arguing so reasonably, so plausibly: Save Thyself if thou wouldst save Thy Gospel? That cannot be God's way for me. I have lived these days above the need of food—rapt away from earth by the whispered words of my Father in my heart,

and yet I find that I am not immune from hunger. Even as the children of this generation find their earthly bread, so must I find mine ; my sacramental meat shall be to do the Will,—obey the Word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. And if ever that Word should lead me to a place where danger threatens my physical existence, still I must obey. . . . Thou hast humbled me, O God, to prove me, to know what was in my heart, and whether I would keep Thy commandments or no. Thou hast humbled me, and suffered me to hunger, and fed me with manna which I knew not, neither did my fathers know, that I might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live (cf. Deut. 8[3ff]). Yea, 'tis thus His Kingdom must be founded among men,—by the voice of God's spirit, uttered through my soul, and passed from heart to heart. I dare not listen to the world's gross clamour of sense, nor found the Kingdom by appeals to bodily gratification. I dare not be a Bread-Messiah. I must wait for the answer of the human soul, wakened at length to the Spirit that would speak to it through me. Ah, here alone lies man's true life, the life that God would give—through me."

So with a word from the ancient Law He thrusts the temptation from Him.

" My Son ! My Son ! In thee I am well-pleased " : the beatific melody comes floating back and repeats

itself within His heart again. And the soliloquy is resumed. "The object of my Father's deepest love; and all the riches of His Power at my command! . . . Spirits of the Unseen, I may bid you come and go! Demons, I am your Master! The Messiah! Chief servant in the bringing of the Kingdom! 'Tis my duty to assert my claim before the world . . . But how?" . . .

Another pause, and through the stillness comes a confused murmur, heard as from without, the voice of the Spirit of the World again—a demonic voice, yet all in the garb and tones of sanctity this time, speaking the very language of Holy Writ, prompting and suggesting close at hand. The vision changes, and the rock on which He sits on the steep hillside shapes itself on His fancy as the Temple's corner-stone. And from the shadowy courts below the sound creeps up, tumult of priest, and scribe, and Pharisee, of pious superstition, legal arrogance, and spurious dream:

"A sign! A sign!" they clamour. "Thou art of Nazareth. Thy cradle and thy home were lowly. If thou be the Son of God, then demonstrate thy claim. —Summon the angels to sustain thee. Is not the promise written? Come! Fling thyself down!" . . .

"What? Shall I thus confirm my Messianic commission,—silence the priest and scribe,—win the gaping wonder of the superstitious throng,—startle men into faith? . . . But what kind of faith?

. . . Presume on the laws of the Supernal Power entrusted to me? Nay, the true way of God's Anointed is surely the way of self-effacement, stealing into men's hearts by unobtrusive gentleness, by human sympathy and love. Only along the pathway of the humble shall I keep company with my God, my lowly-hearted, my Eternal Father. . . . Tempt God! Force His hand,—strain His complacency in me to breaking-point by sensational self-glory? Away with the thought! I will make no vain claim, nor sustain it on an empty wonder. If I cannot live in lowly obedience, I do not wish men to confess my right to be *the Son*; but I *will* obey, I will not tempt God."

Again, with a severe rebuking word from the ancient Law He thrusts the impious suggestion from His mind.

Climbing thus the lower circles of the Self, reaching beyond the region of the base material craving of the dull-souled populace, and beyond the unwholesome demands of perverted religious instinct, He passes at length in fancy out into the presence of all the nations of the world, men from the East and West and North and South for whom this Kingdom was divinely destined,—not for Israel alone. And mingling with the vision come impressions of the vast World-Power that had flung the conqueror's shield across so many kingdoms, and cast its shadow even on His people's holiest shrine.

"Power? World-power? Yes, I too seek for that,—a world-wide sway for my Father's Kingdom. That is His Purpose—and my dream. The restoration of the throne of David! The prophets longed for it. The people wait for it. Yea, a throne whose sceptre shall stretch out towards 'the islands of the sea'! And ever since that liberating hour at Jordan I have been conscious of haunting heavenly power. With such gifts from God,—all human qualities transfigured by the Spirit's dower,—I may climb, if I choose, by easy strides to the world's throne by the world's ways . . ."

And as from a lofty mountain-top the while He mused He saw the kingdoms with their glory pass before His eyes. And a presence, shadowy, sinister, colossal, seemed to shape itself more sharply now against the growing gloom.

". . . The World's throne! . . . But by the ways of the spirit of the World? By the way of self-assertion, egoistic aggrandisement, the way of the Conqueror, controlling the movements of vast hosts of men? . . . What? Capitulate to the Earth Spirit, yield homage and allegiance to the 'Prince of the power of the air'?—Whose then would the world be when I had won it? 'Twould be but the possession of him to whom I had sold my soul and its gift Divine—a slave! Get thee behind me, Satan! Let me in lowly reverence wait on God. Let me take the way, not of material brute force,

directed and controlled by self, but of heavenly power flowing from the fount of love. And if love mean sacrifice and sorrow,—if that be the price of spiritual victory—God's will be done. Him only must I serve."

Thus the two paths confronted Him for choice in the fulfilling of His vocation,—both of them paths to power, but one debased, materialised by self, and one transfigured, sanctified by love. With unfailing insight and unfaltering will He chose the latter. No paltering with bribery, sensationalism, or compromise! Not one step along the way of earthly self-security, the undivine ascendency won by self-display, the short-cut way of forceful self-assertion. But the way of self-surrender to the Will and Word of God, the way of self-effacement and of sacrifice.

So the devil left Him, exhausted but a conqueror, Lord of Himself—at rest.

III

From the wilderness Jesus comes to Capernaum to begin His God-given task; and it at once becomes apparent what He conceived the nature and essence of His task to be. The burden of His message is "Repent; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mark 1^{14f}). He constitutes Himself the Herald of the Kingdom, the Revealer and Interpreter of the Sovereign Will of God. And we do not need to travel far beyond the sayings which we quoted at the

commencement of this study of our Lord's vocation, (1) in order to discover the source of the urgency and the note of authority with which He began His work; (2) to probe to the inner secret of His message, the fundamental law of the realm of God; and (3) to ascertain the place which He felt Himself called to occupy in that Kingdom.

"I came . . . I am sent . . . He sent me,"—the reiterated phrase is an impressive revelation of the inner consciousness of Jesus. "I came"—a bare, unqualified, mysterious word, all its presuppositions taken for granted as though they must be perfectly plain to the hearers. "I am here at the end of a journey"—the beginning of which was—where? And the question deepens in intensity when we hear Him say "I am sent"—I was bidden to come. It speaks of an action not on His own initiative; it betrays the consciousness of another and an all-constraining Will behind His work. "God's will was the source of the purpose of my life. My life was *His* plan. He sent me." And there is in the phrase all the passion of Jeremiah's confession: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay" (20⁹); and of St. Paul's: "necessity is laid upon me, yea woe is unto me if I preach not . . . " (1 Cor. 9¹⁶).

(1) When we look more closely at these vocation-words it soon becomes evident that this conviction,

which grew to the intensity of revelation under the Divine touch at Jordan, found its Divine sanction and authority in the records of the sacred past, while the pressure of its urgency and constraint came from the desperate plight of the human conditions with which Jesus was immediately beset.

The new note of authority is heard sublimely in the great passage in the " Sermon on the Mount " (Matt. 5^{17-48}). Perhaps these Logia are fragments of the Sermon that so astonished the Caperniotes when He inaugurated His campaign in their synagogue (Mark 1^{22}). " Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfil " (Matt. 5^{17}). Surely it is a confession that the urgent call of God to go became filled for Him with definite content and substance through the covenant with God's chosen race, which is enshrined in the heart of their sacred Law, and through the hankering note of incompleteness and forward-reference which pervades the voices of ancient Hebrew prophecy. It is a confession of His long and reverent meditation upon Holy Writ, and an acknowledgment of His own deep debt to the holy past. It is Jesus' recognition of the effort of God to reach man in that quickening breath of the Spirit which brought the Law to birth,—an effort which had been tragically thwarted by the piled up mountain of Rabbinical tradition and precedent (Matt. 15^{6}), and by the thick clouds of priestly ritual

and ceremony. But, above all, it is the startling disclosure of a conviction that in Him there is to be a consummation of His people's destiny. "The express purpose for which I am here," He seems to say, "is to gather the loose threads of Israel's history, and weave out the web to its finish." He had come to end the harsh and cold externality into which the Law had been metamorphosed, and to renew its inwardness, giving men back its living soul—love to God and love to man (Mark 12^{29ff}). He came to restore the solemn, eternal verities, judgment and mercy and faith (Matt. 23^{23}) to their rightful place in the spiritual life of man. Listening to the cry, echoed and re-echoed down the story of the prophets, He came to plead anew God's desire for mercy before sacrifice (Matt. 12^{7}). He came to speak the word, and accomplish the deed of forgiveness which would make men merciful and forgiving, and thereby fit for fellowship with God. He came to establish the New Covenant, writing the new law upon the heart of man.

And it was no word spoken out of mere self-confidence that was spoken in that discourse on the Law. With all the amazing claim of "I came to fulfil" there is no repellent egoism. It was not to exalt His own Person that this strange being, who said "*I*" so frequently (Matt. $5^{22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44}$), was come. It was to efface Himself, give Himself up, lose Himself in devotion to an urgent and all-

commanding cause. He came to be the servant of the Kingdom. The revealing word that came to Him in the Jordan waters had clothed itself in the language of this, the profoundest conception on the lips of prophetic expectation, the fore-vision of "The Servant of the Lord." Was it an accident? Nay, in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4^{18}), and again to the emissaries from the wavering Baptiser (Matt. 11^{5}), He quotes another of these great "Servant" prophecies, and with serene and lofty confidence declares that it has found its fulfilment in Him.[1] "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because . . . He hath sent me." It was the moment of the measureless endowment of the Spirit that was the moment of His investiture as "the Servant." Yes, it is to this crisis at the Jordan, and to all Christ's reading of history and prophecy in the light of the world's need, which led to that crisis, that we must go to find the source of His conviction of vocation.

But "in the light of the world's need";—it was that, supremely that, which quickened the pulse-beat of this consecrated life, till it throbbed and glowed with passion. "Let us go into the next towns to preach there also, for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1^{38}). This word spoken to the searchers on the hills behind Capernaum may have a

[1] How His consciousness became filled with the profounder note of the "*Suffering* Servant" we shall see later.

purely local reference. But if we recall the evening of excitement in the town, the sleepless night which seems to have ensued for Jesus, the rising a great while before dawn, the stealing through the streets and away to the hills alone to pray, surely the emotion of the man, so lonely beneath that solemn burden of responsibility, is laden with an appealing pathos for us. It reminds us of another word, spoken perhaps beside the well at Sychar: "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few. . . ." (Matt. 9^{37}, cf. John 4^{35}). In some solitary valley He had heard the rustling corn tops as the breezes shook them, whispering gently with a patient sigh: "Come and reap me ere I sink to earth and perish." Mile after mile of waving golden corn, and only here and there a touch of scarlet in the lonely glen, the red tunic of some reaper with his sickle bending in desperation to a task beyond his powers. And a sudden frenzy of responsibility seized His soul. *He* was God's Reaper, and the field the world! "So little done, so much to do! A single soul, in human body frail and finite, and before me the great harvest of God! Send forth more reapers into Thy harvest, O my God!" Was it not, in part at least, a similar emotion that drove Him to prayer that morning among the hills behind Capernaum? In that rush of deep emotion His conviction of vocation is illumined by a solemn, tender awe. It is the same note of urgency which

became so poignant in the days when the Cross stood clear before Him: "I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I would it were already burning! I have a baptism to be baptised with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12^{49f}). There, beside the vocation-word "I am come" speaks the note of eager and consuming zeal; and, what is new and strange and wonderful, the sense of coming victory mingles with its passion, as He foretells of the influence of His own Divinely dedicated life of service, yielded at last in uttermost sacrifice, spreading downwards till it captures and sways the hearts of all the world.

But we come closer to the confessed source and cause of this strong passion to serve in another group of these vocation-words,—the words spoken at Matthew's feast, and on the coasts of Tyre, and in the streets of Jericho: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2^{17}), "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 15^{24}), "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19^{10}). It is in this declared purpose of His coming that we find the clearest indication that that mysterious journey of the soul, revealed in the words "I am sent," "I came," is no reminiscence of some pre-existent life straying casually into His memory upon earth. "To call sinners to repentance"—*i.e.*, back to God,—in *that* sense this journey was determined by an

impulse from the heart of God; but it began not in the crossing from the Unseen into Time, but in and through the deeps of His profound experience of earth. The heart of God first confronted Him with its summons in the yearning emptiness of men.

The poignant words spoken on the shore at Tyre in presence of the pleading woman of an alien race, disappointing as they may at first sight appear, are among the most moving of all Christ's confessions of vocation.[1] We seem to see Him turning round upon the shore, recalled for a moment from a deep abstractedness of spirit. The light in His eyes burns passionately, yet it is distant like the throbbing of a star; a look of love and eager longing towards the land He had left for a brief respite. And half sinking back into this abstraction He takes up the disciples' interrupting words on the breath of a sigh "... Crieth after us? ... I have been listening to another cry ... The lost sheep wandering in the dark away out there behind the hills of home are crying after me ... It is the call, the call of God to me!"

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," He said on the occasion of Zacchæus' call. How often—may we repeat?—is that word "lost" associated in the Master's mind with His conviction of vocation! (cf. also Matt. 18^{11},

[1] This will become clear when we consider them as one of the key-words to the story of Jesus' apprehension of the Cross.

Luke $15^{4, 8, 32}$). In all the New Testament there is no word so surcharged with emotion. And its full significance is surely missed unless it is recognised that into the consciousness of Him who used it had come the throbbing of the pain of separation in the heart of God, yearning over the wandering race He made for fellowship with Himself. "I am sent" was no dim recollection of an old word spoken on some blissful shore before the earthly life began. Nor did it come to Him as to a desert eremite dreaming of a kingdom approaching in spectacular splendour on the clouds of heaven with hosts of angels. It was amid the ways of men, and in the cry of "the lost," He heard the cry of God. The urge that drove Him to His task was the result of His being lifted up in vision to share the agony of His Father's bereaved heart.

(2) What then was the inner secret, the "glad tidings of the Kingdom of God" (Mark 1^{14}, Matt. 4^{23}), which He came to declare? What was the positive content of the Message which had gripped Him as God's last word of Love to this world of "lost" souls? Throughout His entire ministry He poured out His soul in the unfolding of the meaning of the Kingdom, the depth and fullness of whose inner principle and law He had won the mastery of in the wilderness above Jordan. It is everywhere throughout the Gospel story. But its essence can be stated in few and simple words. The elements of "the

Kingdom" may be reduced, says Keim, to three: (*a*) The all-pervading Law of Service; (*b*) The Renunciation of Force for Love; (*c*) The Recovery by men of their Divine Sonship. They are really all summed up in the first—The Universal Law of Service. For the renunciation of selfish brute force for love may be translated into the transfiguration of force,—the redirecting of all human activity in self-forgetting service. And it is when the Law of Service becomes the delight of the heart through a μετάνοια, that the slave of the house becomes the "son" of the king.

The Kingdom of God is the will of the Heavenly Father enthroned in the hearts of men. To bring that about, an infinite indebtedness of love to God must first be awakened there. It is love toward God that issues in the true obedience to His Will. And His Will is the love of all for each and each for all. Now the supreme ethical expression of such love is everywhere the same—from God the Father to the least significant member of the Kingdom—self-sacrifice. That is the ultimate principle of morality. It is not only the law in which every individual life must find its own true realisation; it is the very tissue and texture of this Kingdom, this temple not made with hands.

When Jesus said "the first shall be last and the last first" (Matt. 19[30], 20[16], Mark 10[31], Luke 13[30]), He did not merely mean that the first here on earth

shall be last in the heavenly after-life, and *vice versa*; He was uttering the mystic law which expresses even now the Divine economy of the Kingdom. The greatest in the Kingdom is the least of all and servant of all (cf. Matt. 23^{8-11}, 18^{4}). This is His sweeping, paradoxical reversal of the law of the kingdom of the world. In the world the kings who exercise lordship over the nations get from men the obsequious, empty title "Benefactor" (Luke 22^{25}). But in the Heavenly Kingdom the conditions are all inverted. The Father is greatest in His Kingdom. His sovereign will is therefore the humblest and most self-effacing will in the heavenly realm. God is the strong unresting Servant of His Universe. He reigns by serving. For He is Love. God has ever been the Super-drudge of His creation, realising Himself through self-effacement. Because His activity is everywhere we fail sometimes to find Him anywhere. Creation itself is the expression of His eternally forth-flowing love. He is still the Διακόνος—the Slave of His own mighty household, sweeping this little floor, the earth, with His wholesome winds, washing and refreshing it with His rains, warming the great rooms of space with His solar fires, lighting the lamps in the hall of night when the curtain of the dark is drawn. The story of the ages—

> "A fire-mist, and a planet, a crystal, and a cell,
> A jelly-fish, and a Saurian, and caves where the cave-men dwell,
> Then a sense of law and beauty, and a face turned from the clod,"—

is the story of the "sweet, long patience" of the

Eternal Worker. "The words, 'Let there be light' were spoken not merely to the lights of heaven, but to the smoking flax of the unborn human soul." God is within His creation, striving in tireless redeeming humility to lift it towards communion with Himself. "God's in His heaven"? Yes, but the sweet, innocent joy of the slave-girl's song is a radiant sunbeam of the omnipresent Life Divine. It is this Divine Immanence or Humility of God which is our best assurance that "All's right with the world." And the noblest expressions of the Divine Life in human history have ever been the lives that have spent themselves in the service of men, and were, perchance, impaled at length upon the world's sorrow, oppression, misery, and wrong.—"Behold," said Jesus, confronting the spirit of the world that had uprisen within His disciple-circle, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22^{27}). Behold in me "*the* servant"—express image of the will of God. . . . God, the Slave of slaves! It is the most majestic, most awe-inspiring vision of the Divine Life ever given to men,—this shattering disclosure of the humility of God.

"Here is Thy foot-stool, and there rest Thy feet, where live the poorest and lowliest and lost.
When I try to bow to Thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth, where Thy feet rest among the poorest and lowliest and lost.
Pride can never approach to where Thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest and lowliest and lost.
My heart can never find its way to where Thou keepest company among the companionless, among the poorest and lowliest and lost."

So sings the Indian poet.[1] And thus hath a prophet spoken in words that were often in the Master's heart: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but . . . to humble thyself to walk *with* God" (Mic. 6^8, cf. Isa. 57^{15}, Ps. 138^6).

(3) Surely this brings us close to the ultimate significance of this lowly life of service. The life of Jesus was the perfect fulfilling of that Divine requirement. The purpose of His life is not exhausted by saying that He came to be the *Revealer*, to enunciate the ideas, of the Kingdom. He came to be the perfect realisation of the Divine Life in humanity by a life of self-humbling to the uttermost dread service—sacrifice. His life and death are God's love uttering itself forth within the limits of our finitude in flawless perfection. He came to found the Kingdom not merely by proclaiming its laws, but by letting loose the full flood of the Divine resources into human life, thus establishing its laws. Is it not all concentrated in the crowning word of the vocation-consciousness of Jesus, "The Son of Man Himself has come not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10^{45})?

This great high word soars far beyond the credence of scientific pride. That it is a genuine saying of the Master's has not been challenged on critical grounds, only on the ground of theological presupposition

[1] Rabindranath Tagore: "Gitanjali," 10.

or sceptic prejudice. But, psychologically considered, the saying authenticates itself. It has, in every syllable of it, the *ipsissima-verba* ring of a soul laying bare its inmost motive,—the intimate personal note of a great heart in a supreme moment of self-revelation. It cannot by any worthy exposition be twisted into the statement of an outsider explaining a life that he stands looking on at, still less looking back at in memory. It is really an utterance in the first person, though in the familiar objective manner of Jesus.[1] Try to translate it into the terms of a later reflection by someone who is not the subject of them: "Jesus was sent not that men should be slaves to Him but that He should be their slave . . ." no, the words will not say themselves. They are robbed of all the personal emotion which makes them intelligible. The phrase "not to be ministered unto," occupying a place of emphasis, betrays a spirit pained at being misunderstood, and solemnly repudiating the false conception. They are said because the subject of the words was the speaker of the words, said to the very men whom superficial criticism regards as the authors of the saying, and said because it was in *their* minds the false conception of Him had arisen.

[1] So far as the Synoptics give any indication no one ever used the title "Son of man" but Jesus Himself. From a prophetic source, it was its deliberate emphasis on humanity that drew Jesus to it. To the hearers it would often mean little more than "this man speaking to you;" *e.g.*, "*This man* hath power to forgive," (with a hint of mystery about the phrase).

When we draw nearer to the heart of the meaning of this saying, the self-revealing sense of vocation which breathes through it indicates the speaker of it beyond all question. We are arrested by that word "came" once more, and there leap to our minds afresh the questions, Whence? and Why? Listen to that mysterious title which in itself contains the essence of the meaning of His vocation. "The Son of Man,"—humanity's man,—the man who in listening to the hungry cry of the human soul out of the life of His time identified Himself with it in compassion,—the man who in so responding heard in it the call of a God in need, a God with an unfulfilled purpose and in search of a living instrument whereby to accomplish it. "The Son of Man" —because He thus became humbly conscious that God had drawn near to Him, and laid on Him the burden of leading in that Kingdom of humanity of which His people's dreamers had dreamed. And just because the motive of His life-work was the impulse to fulfil this need of God, His coming was felt by Him to be from God.

Then observe how the purpose is defined—becomes articulate. With a movement of anguish He brushes aside that false conception which was the precise inversion of His vocation,—that He should be a king served by others! Nay, He came to *serve*. At the sound of that word the far-off picture of the Deutero-Isaiah's "Suffering Servant"

starts into throbbing life and reality before us. It seems certain that at this moment, under the unmistakable shadow of the Cross, the memory of this great prophecy was in the thoughts of Jesus, shaping itself in the lineaments of personality. In His soul the prophet's "yet-to-be" has become a "now." That which had been a dream of future history has become a fact within history. That which the prophet felt was surely being moulded by the Potter on His wheel, those long centuries ago, is here, the finished vessel from the hand of God,—the vessel into which all the anguish and sorrow and shame of humanity is about to be poured, till it break at length, shedding the healing sorrow and love of God. He came to serve, to be the Suffering Servant, to give His life,—to serve by sacrifice.

Thus the sayings have justified step by step our reading of the great experience which was consummated at Jordan and in the wilderness. There remains one feature to be emphasised. Already we have felt ourselves being drawn within the circle of a soul that in a unique experience had become one with the consciousness of God. But the vocation-sayings are not without specific words which set their seal to this impression. In the parable of the wicked vine-dressers (Mark 12^{1ff}), Jesus' clear apprehension of His Divine vocation is interwoven with His own religious interpretation of the history of His race and His dream or ideal of the Kingdom

of God, in a single picture of profound impressiveness. Through the Master's mind, leaning as He does quite frankly for the ground-work of His tale upon Isaiah's famous allegory (5^{1ff}), we are made to see the labour and travail of God to fashion a kingdom or garden of souls which might one day yield Him the ripened fruit of His deep desire. Calmly and serenely, without any trace of excitement or self-concern, our Lord places Himself at the climax and consummation of the tragic story; rather, we should say, discloses His conviction that He has been placed there by the hand of God. "Having yet, therefore one, a son beloved, He sent him also last unto them, saying, 'They will reverence my son'"; or, to quote Luke's version in which the soliloquy of God in heaven is prolonged: "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him." It is the most autobiographical, the most soul-revealing of the Master's parables. And here surely the consciousness of a unique vocation in the Divine economy of the Kingdom soars up in a flight of sublime daring and beauty. As our Lord lets us into His mind in this amazing picture, we kneel trembling on the fringe of holy ground, watching Him while, withdrawn upon the heights of vision, He listens to the Voice, lonely and sad, sighing out of the Eternal glory: "I will send my Son." Surely in Him who thus dares to put upon the lips of God such words

about Himself the confidence in His own consciousness of Sonship is complete. And yet it is something other than daring that is here. It is not the voice of presumptuous self-confidence whose source could only be delusion or madness. It is the reflection of the sunshine of the Father's acknowledgment of His Son, which streams perpetually about the soul of Jesus. It is the simple candour of the child who cannot but speak the things He has seen and heard.

Now beside this let us place the word spoken at the sending forth of the disciples: "He that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me: he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me" (Matt. 10^{40}, Luke 10^{16}). Jesus claims that men should stand in reverent attentiveness before the "Sent" One, the ambassador in whom is invested all the majesty of the Sender. He suggests that to despise Him is to despise *God!* Even as intimately, as personally, as confidingly as the disciple knows the mind of the Master, so intimate, personal, confiding is His knowledge of the mind of God. Deep and passionate, as the Master's regard for the disciple, is God's concern for the Son. He and the Father are one—two wills in perfect harmony of communion, two hearts that beat as one; an ethico-mystical union, a profound coincidence of moral and passional experience. And yet,—as if completing and clarifying the thought, safeguarding it from any suggestion of unwarranted egoism,—the saying is

repeated in Luke, in that moving scene where in the midst the Master placed a little child (9[48])[1]. Even as it is the humility of the child in us that apprehends the God in Him, so it was to the perfect humility of the child in Him that there was unveiled the Holy Presence of the Father, and the Father's call to service.

One with God in moral and spiritual consonance, there is never in the experience of Jesus any blurring or fusion of the personalities. "I and my Father are one" in thought, in feeling, and in moral purpose. And yet, "My Father is greater than I." In childlike humility and dependence, the Son stands ever, even in the hour of holiest vision, looking up into the face of His majestic Father. But in that very lowliness of Christ lies all the majesty of Godhead. For the Divine majesty is most truly seen in the measureless humility of God.

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11[25]). Yes, between the ecstasy at the Jordan and the passionate self-disclosure of "the Servant" as the end drew near, there lies this other mighty peak of rapturous vision—the hour in Galilee when His disciples returned with excited stories of their labours. This was the moment of the Master's

[1] Whether it is in place here or not, the fact that Luke inserts it surely reflects a disciple's memory of the Master's mood and tone when it was spoken. *Cf.* Mark 9[37].

purest joy on earth (Luke 10^{21}), unshadowed either by the solemn gloom of the desert conflict, or by the passion of the days before the Cross. Something of the Divine in Him these simple friends of His had evidently caught. God had revealed it to them. But, above all to Him, the Lowly One, the Eternal Child, standing with eyes of solemn wonder in the vast hall of the House of many mansions, "all things"—all the great secrets—had been confided by the Father. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." . . . Then, in this "fleeting moment made eternal," comes the great outburst from His enraptured lips: —first, the most soaring utterance of His consciousness of God, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him"; and then, without any effort in the transition of thought, there is spoken the supreme consciousness of unique vocation. But here it is an utterance in which the mysterious journey, pictured by the words "I came," "I am sent," is seen to foreshorten and completely vanish away. The sense of a heavenly call heard somewhere in His past experience becomes identified with the secret life-centre of His own personality; and He cries in a voice in which all the yearning of the heart of God His Father speaks, "Come unto *me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest . . ."

SECTION III

The Cross in the Experience of Jesus

CHAPTER I

The Spirit of Expiation in the Life of Jesus

THERE is a well-known picture of Holman Hunt's entitled "The Shadow of Death." One stands as it were by the entrance of the Nazareth workshop looking in upon the scene. Jesus is facing the open door-way. He has been sawing wood upon a trestle, and has just raised Himself for a moment. Stretching His arms in a gesture of utter weariness, He looks out into the waning sunlight that comes flooding through the door. His shadow is cast against the rack of boring and cutting instruments on the wall behind Him. Shadow and tools together make the rude outline of a figure on a Cross. Jesus is all unconscious of what His mother, kneeling by the oil-jar, sees upon the wall. Yet the haunting thing about the picture is the sorrow in the face.

There are three types of human face upon which there hovers the light presageful of sorrow. One, a hard, bright, dry-eyed, wrinkled face, betrays the sorrow of disillusionment and world-weariness, the sadness of eyes that have looked through life, and found that it holds no secret, no ultimate undisclosed

meaning, no God. Life is a bubble. Thought is but matter's dream which death dispels. . . . . Obviously that is not the weariness and pain upon the face of the Carpenter.

There is also the face of one marked out by nature, or—it would sometimes seem—by destiny, for premature death. Innocence and precocity and solemn wonder mingle often in the aspect of that face. But the pathos is imported there. It is the spectator's own contribution. The sense of tragedy is aroused in us not infrequently by the very absence of any consciousness of impending misfortune in such a face. It wakens pity in the spectator more than awe. Where there is awe, it is not of the person, but of the inscrutable Power which seems to have marked down and cast its baleful shadow on the life. Herein, perhaps, lies the weakness of the picture we have mentioned. There is indeed sadness in the eyes of Jesus, but it is the brightness and vague confusion of present physical weariness rather than the premonition of impending doom. The shadow of the Cross behind the Christ is beyond His field of vision. It is seen only by Mary,—and by the fancy of the artist to whom the closing chapter of that life is an old, old story. It is left to the onlooker to transmute the expression of bodily ache and weariness into a foreboding spiritual sorrow.

The sorrow-laden face that fills us with awe towards the person is the face that reflects a real

burden of the spirit within. Such must have been the face of another Galilean prophet with whose mournful story Jesus was understandingly familiar, —Hosea (cf. Matt. 9^{13}, 12^{7}). On a cathedral window somewhere he is represented by a figure drawing a white robe about him, tightly, shrinkingly,—his face filled with a look of horror, pity, pain, and shuddering; a startled, agonised face,—a reflection of the face of God to whom the abysses of the human heart lie bare! If that shadow—the sombre gloom of the world's moral darkness falling across a life of intensely sensitive purity—is the shadow of death, then it was the familiar of Jesus, dogging His footsteps from the days beside the bench.

To Jesus, as indeed to every great spiritual genius,[1] the difference between right and wrong had an eternal significance. The decree of the Divine Righteousness about that verdict could never be reversed (Matt. 25). He saw this world as a "vale of soul-making," a probation place in which men through enduring steadfastness would enter into possession of their souls (Luke 21^{19}), become completed personalities impervious to vicissitude, through heroic self-sacrifice would find their souls in the life of God who is not the God of the dead but of the living (Matt. 10^{39}, 22^{32}, cf. Mark $9^{43\text{-}50}$). But the picture had its reverse side. Souls could unmake themselves. The human soul surrendered to the dominion

[1] Cf. St. Paul, Gautama Buddha, Æschylus, Dante, Carlyle, etc.

of evil was on the way to dissolution and death. Even God cannot make the wayside thorns yield grapes, or the thistles of the field bear figs (Matt. 7^{16}, Luke 6^{44})[1]. The rust corrupting, and the mould rotting, the moth making clothes worthless and unsightly with a certain dusty loathsomeness,—these were nature's manifestations of a dreadful law which held good also in the spiritual world (Matt. 6^{19}, 7^{17}, 12^{33}). Jesus recoiled from the vision shuddering in every chord of His snow-pure soul. He saw the eagles wheeling over the fever-stricken beast in its death-throes in the lonely desert, or gorging themselves with the already putrid carrion (Matt. 24^{28}), and to Him it was a symbol of man's restless craving for lawless excitement which led to a dreary desert of the Universe where the soul became the prey of all the destroying powers of evil In the sight of the vipers crawling spell-bound towards the glare of wrath, where the drought-fires had descended on the parched wilderness, He saw a picture of the awful fascination death and destruction seemed to have for the wicked (Matt. 23^{33}). If we put every conception of hell, built up by centuries of materialistic and penal theology, out of our minds, and look at Christ's picture of soul-waste with honest candour, there is nothing in the world's literature to compare with it,—nothing. Remember what Gehenna

[1] Contrast Emerson's facile optimism: "The Divine energy is never relaxed, and the carrion in the sun, the gaol-bird on the gallows, are on the way to all that is good and true."

actually was in Palestine. Beyond a nameless gate of Jerusalem it lay, a mean valley in a cleft of rocks, the refuse deposit of the city, where men tried to destroy what could be destroyed of their heap of rubbish—ashes, straw, offal,—by setting fire to it. A dreary place which the light of day seemed to shun, full of evil smells and slow, smouldering fires. A bitter, acrid smoke loitered about its dismal recesses; and slatternly, raucous, screaming birds; and apparently the same undying worms wriggling forever in the festering offal (Mark $9^{43\cdot48}$). Christ hints at the scene, and adds a final touch to the picture, leaving it full of horror in its very vagueness,—"the Outer Darkness." Night over Gehenna, away from the lights and fellowship of the city, beyond the wall! And in this region of filth and decay, outcast, unclean, owned by nobody, wandered the poor, starved pariah dog, whose dismal howl and ghastly gnashing of teeth might be heard in the silence even of moonless nights. Who would give one thought if he could help to such a place or its denizens (Matt. 8^{12}, 13^{42}, 22^{13}, 24^{51}, 25^{30}; Luke 13^{28})? Even so Jesus seems to have pictured a rubbish dumping ground of the universe, where souls abandoned and undone, "sons of waste," were cast,—their fate being apparently to have lost the capacity of will to act but not the power of conscience to discern.

But whatever the ultimate significance may be,

the picture itself is an impressive revelation of the intense horror in the soul of Jesus as He contemplated the soul, estranged from God by the moral illusions of the evil heart, passing deeper and deeper into the gloom. Perhaps it is neither good nor bad at first, just empty, then a dark and sinister thing creeps up to the darkened window of vision, glares in for a moment, by-and-by returns with seven others, bursts in and takes possession (Matt. 12[43ff]) The soul is broken up into a riot of discordant evil powers. And bending over it all, bending over the soul all along its way towards that gloomy state, bending over it in the " far country " and among the swine husks—the last halting place before the end, God yearns (in Jesus' vision), a broken heart, whispering ever the word " Lost !"

In His own unclouded experience of God Jesus stood where God stood and participated in the Divine emotion, the Divine pain (Mark 3[5], Matt. 23[37], etc.) ; yet He stood in the midst of the human race, Himself a son of man, brother to those who wandered and stumbled, and came to grief, and soiled their souls, and perished miserably. He saw the remoteness of men from His own purity and from God, yet He felt Himself drawn close to them in love,—God's love in Him. How to bridge the gulf of sin-estrangement, how to bring the Father that He knew into that emptiness of soul in man, how to bring them back to God, how to disclose to them in His

own life the infinite Holiness that knows and feels, yet stoops to bear,—how to be to them, in short, the Divine Forgiveness,—that was where the kernel of the problem in His vocation lay for Him. In other words, when we have penetrated to the vital nerve of Christ's consciousness of vocation, we discover it to have been an *expiatory* consciousness. All through our investigation of the sense of vocation in the experience of Jesus this word was clamouring to be heard. We must speak it now. Or rather, let it speak to us again in the great vocation-word: "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10^{45}). Doubtless He could not have spoken that word, with its solemn and subduing close, in the workshop at Nazareth. But the burthen of the sorrow was already gathering in that observant, eager, questioning love, always exploring the intricacies of the human life around Him,—the blood-red ruby of sorrow which the alchemy of experience was by-and-by to transform into the spirit of expiation.

I

As soon, however, as we pass into the days of the Ministry, the feature that immediately impresses one about the bearing and spirit of our Lord is His *joy*, —that resistless, contagious radiance that flowed from Him, through His words, His deeds, His life. What was the source and spring of it? For it has

been exploited, in order to challenge and deny that element in the inner experience of Jesus, with which we are now engaged. Was it the joy of pure child-heartedness? Was it the radiance of intense physical vitality? Was it the exuberance of an untested confidence in the success of the holy Cause that had claimed Him?

Probably in each of these directions may be found some of the lights and colours which were woven into the rainbow harmony of His joy. But none of them really touch its fundamental secret. "His lovely character and doubtless one of those transporting countenances which sometimes appear in the Hebrew race," says Renan, "created round Him a circle of fascination; tenderness of heart was in Him transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm." "Jesus," says Strauss, "appears as a naturally lovely character which needed but to unfold to become conscious of itself." We are asked to envisage Him as a single-hearted Dreamer, too simple to know much about the dark secrets of the world; a full-blooded, healthy man of sanguine temperament and infectious enthusiasm; a mistaken enthusiast, indeed, who in the end was broken on the wheel of the hard, relentless facts of life.

Of course He was child-hearted. Who does not feel the glamour, the simple charm, that hovers about His words and deeds? But to assert that it was the simplicity of mere childlike innocence is to

make a grave misjudgment. For profounder than the influence of His radiant presence upon men was the impression which His penetrating insight made. There is no contradiction here. The faculty of direct discernment belongs to the highest simplicity. His burning, piercing eyes saw straight into the human heart. Men were disconcerted by His power to read the inmost thoughts as much as they were attracted by His joy. "From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these things come from within and defile the man" (Mark 7^{21}). There are many such black catalogues in the New Testament. This is the first. And it came from the lips of Jesus. Commonplace the sordid crew of vices seems to us to-day. We have to remember that with its first utterance a totally new and startling vision of the disreputableness of sin had burst upon the world.[1]

Of course, also, He had a clean wholesome body, probably never visited by ailment, capable of resisting long exposure, of enduring much exertion. And He knew the exhilaration and the thrill of being alive; loved to climb hills, and make long pilgrimages afoot; loved to breathe the freshness of the

[1] We might refer also to His mordant exposures of Pharisaic sham. cf also Matt. 5^{12}, 18, etc.

air, and the fragrance of the flowers. He relished the tang of hazard and adventure. He had about Him that overflowing vitality which communicates itself to all who come within its circle. But, as a rule, that by itself in a man only claims our disinterested, perhaps even envious, admiration. We enjoy it as we enjoy Spring winds, something we can neither abidingly possess nor be possessed by. Often, indeed, the merely naturally healthy man cannot brook the sight of weakness or ailment. He shuns it as an intrusion on his joy. But that was not the character of Jesus. It was down among life's broken earthenware that the Master's joy became full. And from such His life-giving influence drew forth adoration and devotion. It was not because men somehow received a new vigour in the infectious presence of His superabundant life; it was because they felt He willed to take their brokennesses, their ill-health of body and of soul, upon Himself in an intense and costly sympathy (Matt. 8[17]).

No, the secret of the Master's joy is not to be found in any merely physical or temperamental cause. Its source was the loving will by which His life's activity was directed. It was the joy of the strong man exulting to run a race; the joy of obeying the great call, of serving the Supreme cause. It was the deepest and most satisfying of all joys, the joy of self-expenditure, the delight of finding endless opportunities and outlets for giving

to men the best He had to give. And such a best, —all the resources of the Divine realm of power and liberty which had taken possession of His soul in measureless flood in the hour of vision at the Jordan. It was in this spirit He laid Himself alongside men; not asking them disconcerting and impertinent questions about their souls, but clearly discerning all—the unwholesomeness, the moral haze and gloom, —He sought with frank, disarming courtesy, yet with delicate reverence for the sanctity of the shrine of human personality, to expel the disease with the healing, hallowing breath of His pure sympathy and love. It was in this spirit He received them, and ate with them (Luke 15^{2}, Matt. 9^{10f}), and talked with them, waking their dead delight in clean, simple, natural things. It was in this spirit He chivalrously defended them against the cold, suspicious and censorious goodness which only provoked them to sullen defiance. He was the Physician. If He gave His time to proud, self-satisfied people, who were quite convinced of their own wholeness, would He not be wasting His time (Matt. 9^{12})? His place was among the broken.

This was the reason why they welcomed Him, coveted His company. He belonged to a world far above them; yet—somehow—because of this unconquerable faith of His in human nature, it became easy for them to rise above themselves. When they thought of their own hopelessness, the

degrading bondage of the passions into which they had sold themselves, they must have often wondered if He really knew. But when they stood in His presence and looked into His eyes, they knew that He knew. And still He believed. It was strange! And they found themselves waking up into a new life in His presence, with singing and laughter—and tears. Unaccountable tears! All their attention was absorbed in the joy. But the tears were from the deep well of the heart that lies beneath waking thought, because a glimpse had been caught of the light which the light of joy conceals, the secret pity and pain of the pure heart that knew and was bearing their shame; and they had answered it, as alone they could, with penitence. It was their response to the glowing courage, in which shame and pain were not ignored or evaded, but absorbed, surmounted, overcome. It was μετάνοια, the counterpart of vicarious expiation.

There is nothing incongruous, then, in setting the description of the sorrow-laden eyes at the bench in Nazareth beside that of the rapturous rush with which He entered upon His vocation. It was all the gathering anguish of a soul, exquisitely sensitive to the touch of sin and pain, as through the hidden years He struggled slowly towards the clear light of the Divine call, suddenly finding relief for itself when the Divine path opened up before His feet; and burgeoning inevitably into joy. It is the joy that is sib to sorrow

and agony. It is the joy of self-donation, sacrifice. This is one of those true paradoxes which find their perfect synthesis in the Divine Life. The stream of Creation's discord and anguish flows into the Eternal life and love. The holy creative and redemptive energy which is surgent and aggressive alike in Nature and in human life is the outbreathing of the Divine love in joy.

One question still remains. The joy of Jesus was that of an absolute devotion to the cause of the Kingdom of God. How far was it the joy of an uncalculating confidence in victory, the radiance of a youthful optimism to which defeat was unthinkable? Seen in the highest light, there is in Christ's joy the note of absolute assurance in the consummation of His task, but to say that it was built on the dream of a swift and all-conquering rush of victory, to say that the tragedy of His life lay in the gradual disillusionment of a blind, mistaken enthusiasm, is once more to err profoundly. No one who has sincerely gazed into the mysterious deeps of the Temptation can for a moment entertain that view. "His refusal to turn the hard stones of His experience into the bread of self-satisfaction" meant a clear-eyed facing of the fact that there can be no moral or spiritual victory save at a price. His refusal to presume on the intervention of Heavenly Powers as a means of attesting His claims involved the vision of the dark possibility that some day His

foot *might* be dashed against the stones. His refusal to accept the world's way to a temporal kingdom and glory, His acceptance of God's way—the way of love—to a spiritual kingdom, or supremacy in human hearts, must have left Him with no illusory dreams of escaping the bitterness of sorrow and sacrifice. Nay, in the ecstasy of the baptismal waters, was not the filial consciousness of Jesus linked with the sudden revelation of Himself as "the Servant"? And at many a place in the sacred and prophetic books the conception was woven about with a wreath of thorns. He was all too familiar with the prophet's earthly guerdon (Matt. 23^{35}). He reminded His hearers of it once and again in words undoubtedly spoken in the early days in Galilee (cf. Matt. 5^{10ff}, 10^{16ff}; Mark 6, Matt. 13^{57}; Luke 11^{50})[1]. And if any doubt remains that the strong presentiment of a dark doom lurking in the veiled future was with Him even in the earliest days, it is utterly dispelled by one great word in which the highest joy is coupled with the chill and awesome breath of sorrow. It is the chivalrous defence of His disciples' joy, spoken apparently at the close of Matthew's feast,—or at any rate not many weeks after the Ministry was begun. It was

[1] These words seem often to contain a veiled self-reference. The fate of John the Baptiser, last of the prophets, certainly suggested to His mind a similar issue for His own career. The word about it, which He spoke to His three disciples as they descended from the Mount at the end of the ecstatic experience of acquiescence in the Cross, is obviously a reverberation of the feeling that had visited Him when the news first came (Matt. 17^{12}).

spoken in an atmosphere of felt hostility to the spirit by which His life was directed—an atmosphere of rigid, sanctimonious self-sufficiency and pride (Mark 2^{19}, Matt. 9^{15}, Luke 5^{34}). "Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" He asked the complainers, giving Himself the name of purest joy. We can see the eyes of all the company turned towards the radiant face to learn the meaning of the sudden pause which must have here ensued. We can feel the shadow stealing across the scene, as an icy breath seems to strike the dancing waters of His soul, and the light dusks, and the face grows solemn. A strange fear, a bewildering pain, a ghost that steals, unbidden and unwelcome, to the feast,—came the subdued word, spoken almost involuntarily, half to Himself: "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast—in those days." There is a shudder in the closing words. It was utterly mysterious to His disciples as yet, but its very incongruity made it memorable. The sad sincerity of it is its own best evidence. And the glimpse is enough to prove that the shadow had already fallen on "this rapt, swift, and piercing spirit," from the beginning.

II

But we anticipate. Before we begin to trace the transforming of this shadow of the discord and pain

of human life which lay on the soul of Jesus into the sharp and concrete consciousness of a tragic death, a gruesome Cross, it is clearly laid upon us first to seek to win a glimpse of the inner meaning of that anguish of spirit which we have called the expiatory consciousness of Jesus.

The Christian religion has long suffered from the over-eager desire, and—we cannot but think—the mistaken efforts of the dogmatists, to reserve the spiritual fact of vicarious expiation in its entirety for the One Life alone. Expiation is a cosmic fact as fundamental as the law of gravitation. The crimson strands of vicarious sacrifice are woven into the very tissue and texture of creation. Even in the long travail of the growing earth, is not this fact, which has become articulate and transmuted in the higher realm of human experience, seen blindly groping its way upwards, by tangled and thorny paths, into the light, through the horror and cruelty of the struggle for existence, where the life of the weaker falls a sacrifice to the demand of life in the stronger, or in the more cunning ?[1] Then through all the higher animal life, and especially mankind, it runs in a nobler form, waxing, waning, breaking out in fitful gleams of splendour. The birth of one life involves sacrifice and suffering on the part of another ; the preservation of young life and of the frail and broken involves the sacrifice of toil and

[1] Cf. R. L. Nettleship : "Philosophical Remains" ("Atonement ").

sweat, of blood and tears on the part of others. And in many a heroic hour has man laid down his life to save the lives of his fellows.[1] It is still largely in the physical realm—life given for life—but surely there is a dim hint of spiritual expiation in it too, when the flower of a country's manhood, fresh young lives in the bloom of youth, innocent in large measure of the crime, go down to death upon the battle plain, bearing the penalty of the black sin-mass—the creation of the older generation,—which bursts volcano-like, and devastates the world with war. Crowning all, in the human consciousness this passion-flower of the Spirit-World has come to bloom, wherever love lays itself in compassion alongside wretchedness to alleviate and rescue[2], wherever innocence bears in agony the shame of others' guilt, —where the pure maid in an evil home, for example, becomes the conscience in which the sorrow of a brother's degradation or a sister's shame "comes alive," is experienced and borne.

[1] Even when the danger may be erroneously conceived, the motive for the deed may be very noble, *e.g.*, Curtius plunging into the earthquake chasm in the Roman Forum. The case of Arnold von Winkelried, sinking the Austrian spears in his breast to win the fuller life of freedom for his land, is worthy of mention here.

[2] To the cases of St. Vincent de Paul, Peter Claver, Fra Thomas de Jesu (cited in Dora Greenwell's "Colloquia Crucis," pp. 88f) might be added that of Father Damien, the leper's friend, of whom this epitaph was written :

"O God, the cleanest offering
Of tainted earth below,
Unblushing to Thy feet we bring
A leper, white as snow."

These instances carry us within the region of the Cross.

There are those, indeed, who resent the intrusion of such a spiritual fact upon their lives; nay, sometimes even deny the reality of the fact altogether. Their own self-respect, the natural justice which lies at the heart of things, demand (they say) that all expiation must be self-expiation. There is something in that attitude of mind which appeals to our common humanity. It contains a profound moral truth. God's world is a moral world, and He *never* releases the offending human soul from its sense of obligation to make reparation for its own wrong-doing. But even when that is done to the uttermost limit of human capacity,—when Hester Prynne, for example, in that marvellous study of self-expiation, "The Scarlet Letter," attempts to work out the cost of her sin,—are we not left in the end with the feeling that she is still in a measure "outside"—that her life has not, even yet, been truly restored to its place in the harmony of the Divine life? The reason for this is that Hester Prynne, and the interpreter of human life who created her, are struggling within the tyranny of a false view of the world,—the stern, penal view of the New England theology. It may be that Hawthorne repudiates the theology, but only to substitute for it a view of the world as given over to the hard, mechanical, impersonal rule of natural law, and "the tendency not ourselves which makes for righteousness." But in either case we are landed in an *impasse*. Self-

expiation cannot placate outraged law, where the law is regarded as external to its Creator. The true and only way out of the *impasse* is when we transcend these false views of the world, and discover the ultimate truth of the Universe to be a holy, personal omniscience—God, the Father-heart, in whom the cosmic and the moral order live and have their meaning. A law never forgives. But a conscience in which the law lives may. And Divine forgiveness is the Eternal conscience and love doing right by the law, realising, confessing, bearing, and in bearing judging and undoing, the shame of the wrong. It is when the sinning soul experiences this shattering response to sin on the part of God that it finds its way by penitent surrender back to peace and rest in the Eternal life, the realm of the Divine Will.

But how does vicarious expiation on the part of man link itself with the Divine forgiveness? Within the life of God all creation and all human souls live and move and have their being. In that Holy Heart the moral discord, the guilt, the misery of the human race lives transmuted into spiritual agony. And wherever within the conscience of humanity the evil passions and foulnesses of men are experienced in anguish, wherever the cheek of the pure flushes red with the redness of vicariously felt shame, there, *according to the measure of its purity and pity*, is a fragment and far-off reflection of the agonising spirit of God who knows the whole. The heart that the

indwelling spirit of Christ has purified shares (according to St. Paul) the sacred privilege and responsibility of fellowship in His passion. And pure-heartedness, wherever, and according to the measure in which, it is realised, shares in a dim and broken servitude the fellowship of the agony of God. "She felt the Divine presence more and more," says another interpreter of human life[1] in the great scene where Dinah Morris enters the prison to comfort the wretched girl who had murdered her babe and is awaiting the extreme penalty of the law. —"nay, as if she herself were a part of it, and it was the Divine pity that was beating in her heart and was willing the rescue of this helpless one . . . 'See, Lord,' (she prayed) . . . 'I bear her on my arms and carry her before Thee . . . I believe—I believe in Thy infinite love. What is *my* love or *my* pleading? It is quenched in Thine . . .'"

In the case of Christ, the Alone Pure, this consciousness was uniquely realised.

Through such a spirit the Divine forgiveness is mediated to an offending human soul. For the pure heart, living in communion with God, has this

[1] George Eliot in "Adam Bede." Cf. the end of Mr. Peggotty's story of how he found his lost one after his great search: "She kneeled down at my feet, and kiender said to me, as if it was her prayers, how it all come to be. You may believe me, when I heerd her voice, as I had heerd at home so playful—and see her humbled as it might be in the dust our Saviour wrote in with His blessed hand—I felt a wownd go to my 'art, in the midst of all its thankfulness" ("David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens).

further function: it not only bears a share of the burden of Divine agony, it becomes a channel of transmission for the Divine forgiveness. Not only does it possess the intense sensitiveness that reflects vicariously the shame of human sinfulness; it also possesses a secret passage to the heart of the Eternal. And down this passage flows the mercy of God into the life, and through it out into the lives of sinful men. Surely many a time the stained soul, kneeling self-confessed in the presence of some saintly life—father, mother, friend, or lover—feels almost through the finger-touch of the tender purity a reconciliation that in its measure is more than human—is ultimate, cosmic, Divine. The gloom of the veil of moral illusion that hangs over life, projected from the guilty soul, is broken. The grass grows greener, the flowers have a nod of welcome, the hills have a message of peace, there is healing in the whisper of the winds, and the voice of the stream has a confidence to share with him who has been shriven at the shrine of a pure and loving heart.

"The little brooks, witnessing, murmur, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—E'en so! it is so!"

Somehow he has been made aware that the inner chamber of the pure heart has a casement opening on the Unseen life, and that in through that open window blows the piteous breath of the Spirit dew-laden with the sorrow of the infinite forgiving purity of God.

It is here that, it seems to us, we touch the inmost secret of the measureless power with which Jesus felt His soul flooded in the coming of the Spirit at baptism. Power to attract and draw men, power to command and subdue, power to heal the body and the mind, power to revolutionise all human life and social activity? Yes, doubtless. But because it was primarily and supremely the power of a radiant holy love—to cleanse and heal the spirit, to renew the heart, to judge, forgive, redeem. Holiness and love are the two supreme attributes of God. And because once in human life they became flawlessly incarnate in the purity and tenderness of Christ, to Him was given unimpeded power to transmit the Divine forgiveness, nay, to *be* God's forgiveness.[1]

III

We can watch the almost wordless operation of these expiatory qualities in many an arresting moment of the great career. We see the disturbing, conscience-quickening power of His peerless purity in the shrinking of the austere preacher of repentance at the Jordan (Matt. 3^{14}); in the heightened sensitiveness and pain of the disordered mind in the presence of the "holy one of God" (Mark 1^{24}, 3^{11}, 57); in the honest impulsiveness of the uncouth fisherman, prostrate at His feet on the shore of the

[1] See additional note at the end of the Chapter.

lake, crying out "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5^{8}); in the embarrassment of the soldier who felt that his home was too unsanctified for His presence (Luke 7^{6}); in the amazed awe of the Nazareth mob that would have flung Him from the rocks, when with uplifted, kingly head He passed through their midst and went His way (Luke 4^{30}); in the silent tramp to the next village that followed the rebuke of the hot-tempered "sons of thunder" who would fain have called down fire (Luke 9^{56}); in the headlong flight of sanctimonious greed before the flashing wrath which cleared the Temple courts (Mark 11^{15}); in the bitter tears of the denier whom a single, silent look drave broken-hearted to the gate of Caiaphas' palace in the grey and solemn dawn (Mark 14^{72}); in the haughty and disdainful Roman, annoyed at first at being involved in a petty Jewish squabble about their petty Jewish faith, yet at length perturbed and troubled, torn this way and torn that, washing his coward hands in guilty fear, because the pure and fearless face had looked at him in disconcerting silence (Matt. 27^{24}). Piercing, searching, judging insight of a purity that was somehow the inexorable mirror of human meanness and baseness, revealing men to themselves![1]

[1] It is incidents like these, revealing a character so straight, transparent, clear-eyed, insistent and inescapable in its moral demands, that fill with intense solemnity such words as "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father in heaven, but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will

What was the inner significance of this strange power to quicken conscience? There is one scene where the full significance confronts us like a mountain summit seen through a clearing in the haze, the scene where a fallen woman is thrust before Him by an intriguing mob (John 8^{1ff}).[1] We see Him stoop in silence, writing aimlessly in the dust, His whole bearing eloquent of burning shame,—the agony of the woman's shame, no doubt, but more the shame of the whole unspeakably brutal situation, the stony, heartless malice that had the hypocrisy to accuse the woman that they might find occasion to destroy the Man. (For the dark heart of the world's sin, it is all too necessary for us to remember, is not found in the under-world of fleshly passion. It is blind, cold, cruel, self-righteous pride. That is the uttermost repudiation of the holy Will of God. That was the sin that reared the Cross.)

Evidently the scene smote on the inner eye of the poet Blake, until in vision he saw the heavens swept

I also deny before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10^{33}, Mark 8^{38}). It beats relentlessly upon the human conscience. He had a right to say it. Nowhere, perhaps, did He actually claim to be what He was—the Judge of men while still on earth; for the words in John in all probability belong to the inspired interpretation of the consciousness of Jesus, rather than to direct utterance. (And we must remember the paradox in John 8^{15f}; He was the Judge that did not directly judge). But He did claim more than once that He was to be the Judge of the human conscience hereafter (Matt. 7^{21}, 16^{27}, 25^{31}, Luke 21^{36}, cf. Matt. 12^{31}). Before that claim on lips so pure the human heart bows in lowly acquiescence.

[1] A fragment of the early tradition, which has somehow found its way into John.

bare, and the dividing light beating downwards from the steps of the Great White Throne:

> "Jesus was sitting in Moses' chair,
> They brought the trembling woman there.
> Moses commands she be stoned to death,
> What was the sound of Jesus' breath?
> He laid His finger on Moses' law;
> The ancient heavens in silent awe,
> Writ with curses from pole to pole,
> All away began to roll."

And out of the heart of the silence comes the swift sword-thrust of a holier judgment. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." And He stoops and writes again. Shame-stricken, speechless, one by one, they melt away. . . . The crimson agony in the heart of the silence of the deserted Temple court became for the woman the agony of the holy love of God, as it had become for the accusers the light of Divine judgment falling through the clear heavens from God's throne. Yes, this sensitive, vicariously shame-bearing holiness of Jesus was expiatory and redeeming power,—because it was searching, judging power.

But for the most part, as He went among the least and lowliest and lost, the disturbing and exposing light of His purity was half-hidden in the radiance of His joy. It was strangely relentless to those who thought themselves the least deserving of censure; for the sins of the mind—pride, and coldness, and posturing, self-sufficiency, contempt, and calculating selfishness—react against a higher purity in malignity and hate. But the passion-ridden outcast of society

spontaneously responds to the sympathy of a radiant wholesomeness. Publicans and harlots found the longings of their true humanity wakened again in the atmosphere of welcome they found in His presence (Matt. 9^{10}, 11^{19}, Luke 15^{1}). They gathered in to the table where He sat, thirsting to drink of His overflowing joy. They had made full proof of the bitterness of "pleasure's joyless travesty of joy." They knew real happiness when they tasted it,—happiness kin (with a difference) to that which children felt in His company (Mark 10^{16}),[1]—happiness priceless though fraught for them with pain. For the deep candour, the probing honesty, the "truth," the reality of the Man, was never far away, and sooner or later found its way to the hearts of those who came to Him. In the case of the palsied man (Matt. 9^{2}) it was this impression that came first. The sight of those clear, penetrating eyes had evidently brought the man to remorseful tears before there fell on him the healing of Christ's blithesomeness. "Son, be of good cheer,"—it was a favourite expression of the Master's. He refused to let His vision be absorbed by the man's stained past. He saw it against the larger background of the soul's eternal worth, the innate capacity for goodness. He saw past the degradation of passion, refusing to think evil, believing all things, hoping

[1] The child's love was Christ's best reward. The second best was to find again the lost child in man.

all things, of the man's still unsullied future. The infinite courtesy of Jesus poured strength, and life, and hope into the broken life, gave him the mastery of himself again. Purity transfigured into joy—that was the character of the power that flowed from Jesus, and that, according to Himself, was the very atmosphere of heaven, breathing its kindly airs around lost souls returning (Luke 15[7, 10]).—Sometimes again the candour was the second wave of influence that the lost soul felt. First, the courageous welcome that could look across the sea of sullen and resentful faces, quite cognisant of the element of justice in their ostracism, and yet say "Come, friend, I must be your guest to-day." The publican knew the desert-leagues of prejudice and rancour across which that welcome had dared to come, knew the expense of spirit that it meant in spite of its radiance. And it won him. And then, within that atmosphere of welcome, the constraint of those infinitely candid eyes drew from him the promise to make four-fold reparation (Luke 19[8]).

But once again we are led farthest in towards the heart of the significance of this radiant sympathy, in the sacred scene in which His feet were washed with the tears of another fallen woman, and anointed with the precious stuff whose fragrance filled the house,—an immortal witness to the pain-drenched love, the costly passion of His pardon (Luke 7[37ff]). Behind the deathless beauty of her deed there is

evident an experience in which she saw the tender, piercing, poignant love of Divine forgiveness. Her tears are a witness to the dim, far-off, yet real sense of the Divine agony in the healing compassion of Jesus. She had found in Him a love that could stoop from the heights of His own chastity of soul, down into all her degradation and shame, to restore to her the lost ideal of womanhood in the light of the all-seeing and all-bearing love of God. And when in the noble defence of her deed Christ spoke the simple parable that made Simon justify the woman's action and pass judgment on himself, it is as if He had said to Simon, "She loves much because she knows how much she has been forgiven. In me God's forgiveness has met this woman and she knows the unspeakable cost of it. She has read the extent of her sin in the pain it has caused God's holiness, which lives in me, to suffer. And she has gladly accepted the gift of that vicarious pain as God's forgiveness."

Purity, love, joy—in their ultimate significance, what are they, indeed, but differing names for one great spiritual reality? If to gratify sense at the cost of the eternal undoing of another soul is the most despicable form of selfishness, the purity that is quick with an infinite sensitiveness to the sanctity of personality is the apotheosis of unselfishness. The tender insight of the pure that sees and bears the shame of others,—what is it but compassionate

love? The holiness that goes out of itself and, following down the path of shame, seeks to find itself again in men, seeks to impart itself to men, is love *in excelsis*. Love is a self-bequeathing; and the best gift love can give is its own purity. And the name for all this energy and expenditure of spirit is joy. God is Joy.

Here in this flaming centre of reality—vicarious expiation—the Spirit of God and the heart of Christ were one. For in His unbroken consciousness of the presence of God, He was lifted up to render back to God out of the midst of our humanity the flawlessly adoring love for which God longed,—not by a barren, self-centred ecstasy, but by resolving to live a life of absolutely loving sacrifice for God's world of men. And in the fulfilling of this resolve He discovered He was obeying the inmost impulse of the heart of God. The love which He spent on men that He might thereby render the perfect offering of love to God was none other than the very love of God Himself for men. Love is the finding of oneself in another. Christ's love of God was the finding of Himself in God through the losing of Himself in the service of men. Out of the heart of our humanity, with which He made Himself so completely one, all the confession of earth's sin rose up to God expressing itself vicariously through His purity. And from the heights of His abiding spiritual access into the Unseen Life Divine all the agonising for-

giveness of the Eternal holiness forced itself into human life and history through the channel of this human heart. And these two waves of consciousness—the ascending and the descending—are but the obverse and the reverse of one and the same fact of spiritual experience. In this lies the essence of atonement.

We are confronted here, however, with a conception which runs counter to all this way of describing the experience of Jesus. Over against it there is placed a picture of the Master's vision of the forgiveness of God as the free, unfettered, and unlimited down-flowing love of the Eternal. It is a love which is without grudge or stint, which exacts no conditions and makes no demands. The parable of the prodigal son, we are told, contains all that is essential in the revelation of God's forgiveness. "He who first conceived and saw with perfect purity and clearness," says Wendt,[1] "the conception of the fatherly, spontaneous, forgiving love of God, did not limit this conception by the idea of the necessary interposition of His own service in order to establish the forgiving love of God for sinners." True, He did not "establish" the Divine forgiveness. But that ought not to blind us to the truth that in the very act of "seeing with perfect purity and clearness," and in *obeying the Divine Will implied in such a vision*, He *became*

[1] "The Teaching of Jesus." Vol. II., p. 244.

the very activity of God in its forth-flowing spontaneity of forgiveness. If His life and death were not the "condition of the sin-forgiving grace of God," they were none the less in very truth the costly action of that sin-forgiving grace, and the consummation of that action in utter sacrifice,—God exacting the uttermost from His own holy Self. If God did not "need this sacrifice in order that His saving grace might have existence," yet this sacrifice was that eternally existing grace breaking through the clouds of human alienation from God in full effulgence. Only He who was Himself the end of God's long unwearied search for the lost (Luke $15^{4, 8}$, 19^{10}) had the right to tell the story of the prodigal.

The confession of this expiatory experience was not often expressly on His lips indeed. But that very fact is itself full of the most moving significance From the very nature of the case it must be wrought out in life and deed rather than in word. Had we been with Him on the mountain-tops where with strong crying and tears He poured out His soul in intercessory prayer to God, we should have heard it in full, unhindered flood. But the expiatory influence of such a life depends partly on the absence of obtrusive declaration. Sinful men are reached by it through a higher channel than that of speech. It lies locked up in the infinite chivalry of Christ's Divine reserve. Concealed—and yet revealed.

But we are not left without a witness from the

Master's lips. It was almost impossible but that, once He had awakened to the whispers of this spirit of expiation in His call, the demands of His career should have forced it some time to articulate expression. And there are certain utterances, spoken on great occasions, or torn from Him by the pressure of circumstance, which arrest attention, stir the heart, and compel the mind to earnest thought. The fact that nearly all of them go back directly or indirectly to sacred voices of the past is in itself suggestive. As if this expiatory consciousness could find no adequate outlet for itself except by identifying itself with the age-long strivings of the Spirit in man to reveal the inmost secret of the heart of God to men. And when these utterances are set in the context of this Life, whose influence was so patently expiatory on the lives of those who stood in its presence,—particularly when account is taken of the great moments that drew them forth,—they are no longer meagre and dubious proofs of His conscious realisation of the Divine meaning and purpose of His life, they are the crimson flowers which betray the true character of the sensitive plant; the answer that alone will satisfy the growing question in the heart of every honest seeker that turns aside to contemplate this Life.

It is perfectly obvious that as He looked abroad on human life, He saw it always as lying under bonds and fetters,—enslaved and weighed

upon with heavy burdens; as though ghostly and demonic fingers were reaching up out of the outer darkness, clutching at the souls of men, closing over them, seeking to drag them downwards. Recall the prophecy He read in the synagogue of His native town: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to be the herald of glad tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to declare deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised . . . " "This day," He added, "is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4^{16ff}). Here is a man giving voice with impressive deliberation to the sure conviction that He has been appointed a "servant" by God to speak the word of deliverance to souls in bondage, nay, actually to set them at liberty,—to bear in His own pure loving heart the power that releases from the thraldom of darkness. And why? Because the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him,—the Spirit that yearns to set men free. Because the agony of God's heart lives again in His compassion.

Hear Him once more in that great hour at the climax of the Galilean ministry: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart . . ." (Matt. 11^{28f}). Here is One who declares He has the power to release men from their burdens of wretched-

ness and despair, as they groan beneath the tyranny of a world where the only thought of God is that of a dreadful Judge commanding threats and penalties through a relentless external Law which they cannot keep. And by what right does He offer release and rest? Because He knows the true and holy and loving mind of God: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." That vision of God maintaining His holiness by separation and a penal law is a cruel lie, He seems to say. God is a God who vindicates and glorifies His holiness by stooping down in infinite and courageous humility to become the yoke-fellow and burden-bearer of the oppressed. Yea, He, the Speaker, is that self-humbling holiness. Through the expenditure of His pure compassion God Himself is stooping to lift men's burdens in reconciling tenderness.

Then, as the end draws near we surely see this ultimate law of the Divine Life writing itself at length in the crimson letters of self-sacrifice in His heart, when we hear the words wrung from Him by the misunderstanding of the dull souls round Him: "The Son of Man came . . . to be servant, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10[45]). "His life a ransom for many"! Whether it was the great picture of the "Suffering Servant," or the Forty-ninth Psalm that was in His mind, it matters not. Probably it was both, and in either case the purport is the same. He looked on this

"vale of soul-making" into which men were born in order that by the long probation of moral freedom they might enter into abiding possession of their souls; and He saw the multitudes who had altogether forfeited the right to that possession. They had outraged the true law of life. They wandered in darkness, thralls of the gloating tyrants Sin and Death, which already claimed them for their own. God alone could ransom them from that grim forfeiture. And God was doing it—in Him. The humility of God was stooping to its uttermost dread consecration, and baptism of blood,—vindicating the outraged law of His own life Divine.

Finally, at the table in the upper room surely we hear this expiatory consciousness uttering itself again in the sacramental word "This cup—the covenant in my blood, shed for many" (Mark 14^{24}). All through life the pathetic spectacle confronted Him of men stretching up vain hands out of the darkness in endless sacrifices of slain beasts, hoping thereby to renew the broken covenant-bonds with God, and so to recover their right to the life that is eternal. How vain it all was! No such sacrifice offered by men's hands could heal the tragic schism. God must do it—by His own self-sacrifice. And God was doing it—in Him. The striking of the new covenant was an act of forgiveness (Jer. 31^{31}) —a true forgiveness, wrought by the most costly expenditure of the love Divine. It was a cup the

bitter contents of which must be fraught with all the tragedy of sin,—yea, even with the taste of death itself.

Here surely is confession enough of the expiatory spirit, step by step deepening in intensity and passion to the bitter end.

IV

In the course of some rivers in the desert regions of the world there comes a point where the single current breaks against silted sand-banks, and divides into multitudinous, little, subsidiary rills ; but there is ever a central channel where the main tide flows. Even so,—it seems to us,—the steadfast flow of the Divine, redemptive energy through creation, obstructed by the barriers of our finitude and ignorance and self-will, has trickled through into life in a myriad humble rills of cleansing purity and love ; but the central current of the Divine mercy was that which broke through into human history in one tumultuous and resistless flood in the life of Jesus. The cosmic law of expiation, which long ago struggled up through Nature into the human spirit, has reached its perfect consummation in the heart of Christ. " The pulse of Nature," says John Pulsford, " beats manward." May we not add " The pulse of humanity beats Christward : the pulse of Christ's life beats time with the heart of God " ? Even if this were the last word to be said

of it, surely to put it thus is not to belittle the universal reach, the unique worth, the abiding necessity for mankind of the expiatory life of Jesus.

But this is not the last word. We are called on now to contemplate one profoundly solemn, subduing yet uplifting fact about it which sets it utterly alone in human history. This expiatory power, which elsewhere has dwelt in sequestered valleys of the human spirit, moving men like the song of a hidden singer, has passed up out of the region of the unconscious, and found a voice for itself,—hitherto, as it were, a haunting, bodiless voice, borne on the dying winds of time; now an authoritative utterance, spoken by Jesus Christ, to become the abiding possession of all the world. It is not merely in giving expression to the expiatory consciousness that He stands alone. Nowhere else in the records of humanity do we find a being who dares to claim an authority to forgive direct from God. Jesus did. And that too, right at the outset of His ministry,—immediately after the conclusion of His first ministering journey through Galilee (Mark 2^{1ff}). "Thy sins be forgiven thee," He said to the palsied man. And then, confronting some onlookers whose shocked faces plainly said, "Why does this man thus speak? It is blasphemy Who can forgive sins but God alone?" He made fearless avowal of the implied claim: "The Son

of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2^{10}).[1]

It is an arresting word; it refuses lightly to be put aside. There are three possible ways of dealing with it. Either the way of ultra-criticism, which says it was never spoken; or the attempt to make it mean something other than it says; or the honest facing of its tremendous significance.

Sceptical scientific criticism can establish no case for its rejection. It offers no reason except its own doctrinaire bias.[2] It is too profound and absolute a claim ever to have been heard on human lips, it is said. But surely it is too daring a word ever to have been conceived by a humble and imperfect follower of the early days before men's thoughts had crystallised into dogma. The uninventibility of the word by an evangelist is guarantee of its historicity.[3]

What, then, is its true significance? The second type of critic says it simply means that "man—this man—has the capacity or the right to declare the forgiveness of sins." Jesus here says what any man of sympathy and insight might say, "as the interpreter of God's will and the law of the

[1] His word to the fallen woman (Luke 7^{48}) produced a similar consternation in His hearers: "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

[2] Keim is obviously embarrassed by its presence in the record.

[3] Matthew's reverence, causing him to omit the Scribes' query (Mark 2^{7}), corroborates by contrast the authenticity of the original story. The word in Luke (7^{48}) has not been challenged.

universe."[1] In one of the most recent attempts to depict Christ from the stand-point of ordinary every-day humanity the view is thus expressed: "He was speaking as a fraction of that close-woven human fabric of which He at all times warmly felt Himself a part."[2]

To say that it is the utterance of a genuine humanity has indeed no terrors for us. True man He was undoubtedly. And possibly the phrase "the Son of Man," occurring thus early, was not intended nor expected to convey any official significance. But what does the sentence really imply? Of course one man in human fashion can forgive another who has done him private wrong. But it would be mere waste of time thus wilfully to deceive ourselves as to the question at issue here. Of course, also, sinful men are at liberty to proclaim the fact that God forgives. But such a word would have had no challenge on the lips of Christ. It would have provoked no cavil among pious Jews familiar with their sacred books. It was not a mere declaration of fact. It was the expression of the speaker's will. It was He who, in entire consonance with the Divine will, had created the fact.

But may we yet evade this conclusion if we say it is the daring instance of a man constituting himself

[1] A. B. Bruce: "Expositor's Greek Testament," Matthew *loc.cit.*

[2] Mary Austen: "Jesus" (in *North American Review*, 1916).

the representative of the human race—"the Son of Man"—and offering *society's* forgiveness to a broken profligate for the tangle of sorrow and suffering his sin had involved his fellows in? The Scribes and Pharisees did not—either here or in the case of the fallen woman—so delude themselves as to the solemn import of the words. Jesus is undoubtedly pointing deliberately to Himself. "Son of Man" means at the very least "the man now speaking to you"—"this man." It is meant to focus attention on the speaker, to emphasise a special claim. No, there is no way of evading the candid interpretation which the words themselves demand of us. Jesus was claiming to offer the man *God's* forgiveness for the rankling wound his life of sin had made in the Divine heart.

But a human being uttering such a word? Yes; One who had from the dawn of moral responsibility remained unswervingly *true to His humanity*. Whatever finitude humanity implies, it does not necessarily involve moral imperfection. And behind these words and in them he that hath ears can hear Christ's loftiest claim to perfect purity of heart. Nay more, it is Christ's abiding consciousness of the presence of God that confronts us here afresh,—indirectly but not less impressively on that account. It is the confession of a spirit raised to the altitude of holiest intuition, in which the limits of finitude are seen to dissolve, as the Spirit of God

floods in over the threshold and completely occupies His soul. It is the opening of that passage from the Unseen into the pure heart, through which the forth-flowing holy energy of God pours down into the life, until it becomes the overflowing chalice from which the Divine forgiveness and healing are transmitted and bequeathed to men.

But to become conscious of the possession of expiatory power?—and to express it openly before men? Is not that a shadow in the sunlight? Do not the beauty and healing power of loving purity depend on the *un*consciousness, the supreme humility with which it is worn? Precisely so. But the arresting thing about Christ's consciousness of the possession of that radiating translucence of soul which conveys redemptive energy is that it is the deepest manifestation of His humility. The passionate interceding prayer breathed from the Cross," Father forgive them for they know not what they do," (Luke 23[34]) is but the inward and Godward side of that measureless self-expenditure of spirit which gives Him the right to speak the word with authority to men. There is here no waiving of His claim. Did He not in the same hour exercise this authority, speaking to the dying brigand the liberating word which gave him back possession of his forfeit soul in the life of God (Luke 23[43])? There was no alloy of self in Jesus' soul to transmute this consciousness of power into a morbid and tainted

self-consciousness which would defeat itself. In every breath of heavenly power He drew He realised it was a Divine bequest to Him,—a gift of the Spirit bestowed by the Father. It was ever received and held by Him in simple, confiding dependence. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good save God only"; there is no goodness which has its ultimate source in the soul that possesses it, save God's goodness. Day by day receiving that goodness in absolute surrender and trust, the Son of Man hath ἐξουσία—divinely bequeathed authority—to forgive, to bestow God's forgiveness on sinful men. It was so that simple, humble souls apprehended His power and accepted His claim, *giving glory to God that such power had been given unto men* (Matt. 9^{8}, Mark 2^{12}, Luke 5^{25f}).

One other point remains to be noticed here. Before such a life can be lifted out of the lowly and obscure pathway which it pursues in the midst of its own generation, to become a pivotal fact in world-history, having "power on earth" to fulfil the heavenly function of forgiveness; before such a life can become an ever-present fact of the universal, human conscience, and no longer a mere incident of a dead past, it must without one single denial or evasion carry that holy power intact even to the latest breath. It is no mere mystic and quiescent power that can be kept wrapped up and hidden in some secret recess of the heart. It is a moral

energy, the holy energy of Divine love, surgent, aggressive, solicitous, imperious. All His outward activity must be urged and directed by it, to reform, uplift, redeem. And that, in a world of wilful blindness, means sorrow; in a world of proud self-sufficiency, which reacts in deadly hate and malice, it means collision and clash; in a world where the very opposite principle is established and enthroned it means in the end a life laid down. Christ spoke this tremendous claim to forgive, because He had in a mighty ecstasy of consecration pledged His word to God that He would carry the gift bequeathed to Him down into the midst of humanity, in an utter and entire obedience, whatever the cost in suffering pain, and loss.

Did He keep His pledged word to God?—Let the end decide.

ADDITIONAL NOTE TO SECTION II. OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER (p. 212).

What we are concerned with, in the body of the chapter, is Jesus' own self-revelation of the experience of expiation. And in the latter half of it we trace some of the many facets of this priceless gem by illustration from the deeds and words of Jesus. In the second section we have been stating the general point of view here taken.—The writer has given further expression to his thoughts on this subject in the *Expository Times* (May and July, 1915.)—It seems fitting that we should meet a possible objection to the point of view by here

stating, however briefly and inadequately, the teaching of the Master concerning the nature of forgiveness in general. It will be held by many that there can be no possible comparison between the nature of the forgiveness which a mortal man may bestow upon his fellow-creature, and the nature of God's forgiveness. But it must surely give us pause, when we remember that in all Jesus' frequent sayings about forgiveness He always sets the human and the Divine forgiveness side by side (Mark 11^{25}, Matt 57, $6^{12, 14f}$, Luke 11^{4}, 6^{37}; the two parables Matt. 18^{21ff}, Luke 7^{41ff}; cf. also Matt. 5^{21ff}, $5^{44, 48}$ etc.); and so far from there being any suggestion of a difference in inner significance, the contrary is implied. The process of forgiving has essentially the same moral and spiritual nature in the finite case and in the eternal. That fact cannot lightly be put aside. But, secondly, the difference Jesus does suggest is a difference of extent and degree (Matt. $18^{24.28}$). There is really no comparison between them in this respect. The debt which God cancels is a measureless debt. And yet He sets the infinite extent of the Divine forgiveness as a stimulus to man to go on forgiving and forgiving (Matt. 18^{22}), nay, even as an ideal to be striven after (Matt. 5^{48}). Thirdly, Jesus makes the forgiving spirit in man a condition of the Divine forgiveness. But He does not mean to suggest thereby that God's forgiveness descends mechanically and automatically on the man who has forgiven his fellow. He is stating in pregnant aphorism a spiritual law which operates spiritually. There are two classes of persons who truly know what forgiveness means: the man who really has experienced what it is to forgive "*from the heart*" (Matt. 18^{35})—and that significant phrase rules out many a light and cheap and pitiful thing which we mortals vainly call forgiveness; and the

man who has really experienced in his heart the receiving of forgiveness (cf. Luke 7^{42}). In a single perfect instance the two experiences are just the obverse and reverse sides of the one spiritual transaction: the one is the exact complement and counterpart of the other. What Christ suggests therefore is that the man who has earnestly striven to fulfil the high, severely taxing, costly, spiritual call to forgive, and who has risen to the height of the great transaction —for forgiving is a thing of blood and tears—is the man who can best understand and receive the Divine forgiveness.[1] Even in the human sphere a true forgiving means that a man must vindicate himself; he must, with expenditure of spirit—courage, humility, passionate sincerity,—do right by the outraged law of his own conscience, accept and undo the entail of discord and disruption which the wrong has wrought in his own life, his own particular world, if his forgiveness is to be a real forgiveness. When a man has done that, he begins at length to catch a far-off glimpse of what the Divine forgiveness must cost God;—"all *that* debt!" (Matt. 18^{32}). The tremendous word goes rolling over the head of the unforgiving man in judgment. But it goes over the forgiving heart which itself needs forgiveness as a boundless flood of mercy (Matt. 5^{7}).

But now lastly, what of the forgiving heart which, itself pure and loving, requires not to ask of God forgiveness? How does it apprehend the meaning and cost of the Divine forgiveness? It is surely very significant that Jesus invariably approaches

[1] Just as the man with a quarrel in his heart may seek to render an outward act of worship, but cannot realise the Divine Presence in worship, so the man with the unforgiving heart can never *from the heart ask* forgiveness however much he speak the petition in prayer. He cannot open the heart to receive forgiveness because he does not know what it means. Therefore he cannot be forgiven by God (cf. Matt. 5^{23}f, with Matt. 6^{14}f).

the subject from the point of view of the experience of the forgiving one. There is one exception—the parable of the two debtors, embedded in the incident of the woman that was a sinner (Luke 7^{48}). And there it is because He is defending an actual penitent, seeking to explain *her* experience. He Himself had no personal experience of the reception of forgiveness. It comes to this, therefore, in the end,—that the perfectly pure and loving heart that forgives is doing right by the outraged law of its own pained conscience, which, according to the perfection of its purity and love, is one with the pained and outraged conscience of God. The pain of man's sin which he feels is a realisation within finitude of God's pain. The forgiveness he bestows is God's forgiveness. In Jesus' case it was so, completely.

CHAPTER II

The Apprehending of the Cross

MANY of the so-called lives of Christ which have been sponsored by the age that is now so rapidly passing away create in our minds, sometimes purposely, sometimes casually, the impression that Jesus of Nazareth was a man of somewhat mediocre intelligence; a person not merely without culture but even childishly simple-minded; a man with a heart too big for His head; tremendously in earnest doubtless, yet pathetically ignorant, without skill or insight to read the signs of the times or to discern the drift of circumstance; a man who, when the conditions of life began to shape themselves in a manner contrary to His fondest hopes and expectations, nevertheless made the grand resolve to stumble on into the mysterious and perplexing darkness that was yawning to swallow Him. We are summoned to contemplate the sublime pathos of His steadfast faith, as He passed rapidly down into the dense tangle of pitiless brute fact that rose over Him, bewildering and baffling His mind—as if *that* were the religiously edifying spectacle in this life, the feature that makes it forever precious and helpful to

mankind! Such a story might have evoked within us pity, sympathy, a certain tender attraction; but no spiritual emotion, no solemn self-judgment, no conscience-cleansing conviction, no reconciliation with God. It would have faded into the past, and become more and more of a picture, a mere tale that is told. It would not have remained among the things that refuse to leave the region of the present,—a living fact, an endless life, something that, like all live things, changes but always for the better, grows fuller, nearer, and more deeply moving as time flows on.

Such a reading of the tragedy which ended on Calvary is surely a challenge to Christian faith to seek, in all humility and reverence, to vindicate the intellectual clarity and foresight, the unclouded moral heroism of the Master's mind; to endeavour to follow the movement of His thought as He became alive to the certain approach of a violent death; and to discover, so far as it has been permitted to us, what it was that this death meant to our Lord Himself, how He integrated this apparent disaster into the scheme of the Divine Purpose, in the fulfilment of which He felt Himself to be the beloved Servant, Divinely called and chosen. It is not enough that we should be able to read and interpret Christ's whole life as one prolonged impaling on a cross. It is not enough that we should be permitted to recognise that the premonition of a dark and menacing

cloud overhanging the end of His pathway was with Him from the outset. Unless we can see it becoming lighted for Him with ultimate moral significance—Divine significance—entering into and taking complete possession of His soul, its absolute authority in human life for judgment and redemption cannot be rationally vindicated.

I

It is not necessary to follow in close detail the phases of the conflict which led to the final breach between Him and the nation.[1] The antagonism was fundamental. What Jesus challenged was nothing less than the most cherished religious conception of Judaism—the *Puritas Israelitica.* It was the very ground upon which was built the imposing edifice of the ecclesiastical order of the day. He struck at its central pillar in His first synagogue address in Capernaum, when with the insight of His own pure, quick conscience He claimed the right to take His stand alongside the inner authority of the ancient Law, and to challenge the authority of those who had robbed the Law of its life and soul, then wrapped it in the grave-clothes of precedent and tradition, and made it a fearsome ghost gazing through prison bars with baleful eyes of flame.

In Jewish thought, contact or communion with the

[1] The chronological order of the incidents cannot perhaps be precisely determined now.

Holy One, the Separate One, was the exclusive privilege of those who had passed in across the partition-wall of slavish conformity to Jewish rite and precept. Every thing or person temporarily or permanently without the pale was vulgar, unclean, out of touch with God. But Jesus declared that the true way to communion with God was the way of the inner obedience of the spirit, not the way of the outer constraint of precept. And because He felt and knew that in His own conscience the spirit of the ancient Law had leaped into life and reality again, He dared to summon before it in judgment the authority of hoary and venerable tradition. His words awoke the people's wonder, and the Scribes' consternation.

Yet he did not strive nor cry; there was neither bluster nor provocation in His tone. His words entered the glooms and shadows of false thought with the kindly yet penetrating sincerity of dawn-light. It was the very Truth, against which there is no reply. He had no deliberate desire to offend officialdom. Very urgently He appealed to those whom He helped scrupulously to fulfil all the letter of the Law. It was the deep desire of His heart to win all Israel, people and priest, for the Truth which had claimed Him for its own.

But the Truth is Divinely imperious; it must neither be suppressed nor obscured. The tremendous reach of the new light that had broken out in

Him began to grow startlingly apparent when He claimed not merely immediate Divine authority for the pure conscience in which the Law had become a living thing, but even power for the pure heart, receiving the inflowing of the Spirit of God that gave to the Law its value and its sanction, to transmit God's forgiveness to men. That such power had been given to a man awoke joy in the breasts of the common people; but in the heart of officialdom only a sneering disdain. For they held that there could be no forgiveness from God save only through the external ceremonial system, the Divinely ordered rites of expiation. They watched Him as He moved on happy and familiar terms with the sinful and unclean. "Where is His purity?" they asked in scorn as they witnessed the courage of His compassion and friendliness. "A *bon vivant*, associate of harlots and outcasts!" Even the disciples of the Baptiser, the great prophet of repentance, with their reverence for the austerities of the Law, were alienated as they took knowledge of His way. It was in facing this unwished-for opposition from a party He respected and esteemed that the first awesome inward premonition of disaster shook His soul: "The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away . . ."

He struck again at the strong outer wall behind which the powerful hierarchy lay entrenched, and broke through it at its most strenuously guarded

point, when He violated the Sabbath law in the name of a holier law of mercy. And the hatred of the official party was roused to active opposition. It was encroaching upon their material interests, this. Destroy the Sabbath, and the occupation of priest and scribe would be gone. So they took counsel against Him. It seems not unlikely, indeed, that at this stage the outraged guardians of the Law pronounced the curse of excommunication against Him, excised His name from the synagogue roll, sprinkled the outcasting dust, and reckoned Him as dead—dead to the Law.[1]

Thus far, however, His popularity with the multitude was in the ascendant. Their wildest hopes were rising to the crest of the wave of expectation. The whispered question passed from lip to lip, "Is this our Promised One at last? What strength, what radiance, what majesty! Wherever He comes He makes the troubled waves of our unrest and brokenness a calm. Can it indeed be He?" Swiftly the climax came. The first of the great temptations of the wilderness took body for itself, and thrust itself upon Him. It was a day of bewildering excitement and confusion. The hopes of the people were precipitated into action. Would He but avow Himself their national Messiah, and satisfy their material cravings—stay their hunger, and they would

[1] In the records of Matthew and Mark He does not appear in the synagogue again.

acclaim Him king.[1] He fled from it to the lonely mountain-top, where with strong crying and tears He spent the night in prayer. He had rejected their overtures. He had disappointed popular hope, and popular doubt began. Henceforward He was still the prophet whom they loved to gather in about to hear. But their vision of Him as Messiah waned and faded. His friends began to think Him strange, unbalanced and unhinged. He had grown so earnest in His pleading. His very life seemed to be burning out in a frenzy of zeal.

The second temptation confronted Him in concrete shape when the officials of Judaism met Him with specific demands for a "sign." "That power of His to soothe, to calm, to heal the demon-haunted mind—that is not of God," they said; "that is a secret permission from the Prince of demons." And His anger burst into flame. They had outraged the sacred thing which lived and moved within His heart. If anything was a sign of the presence of God in Him, it was surely the peace which fell from Him upon disordered minds. They had hardened themselves against the Holy Spirit of God Himself. For such a sin—the sin so blind as to call Divine Goodness devil-born—there could, in the very nature of the case, be no forgiveness. "No other sign from me shall they receive, but the light of the Spirit of Truth

[1] Cf. John 6[15]—an explanation which the Synoptic narrative demands.

which shines on the heart, when I speak to them the mind of God."

Definitely challenged at length, He openly called the supreme principle of their holy religion, the sacred *Puritas Israelitica*, in question. "Not all your outward washings, your rules and conventions of purification, can give you the separation, the holiness that leads into the Divine presence. Purity of heart, the reverent chastity that keeps the inner room of the soul from the muddy trafficking of vulgar things—that alone is the way to God." And the chagrined officials, seizing the opportunity presented by the people's growing doubt of Jesus, played upon the fundamental superstition of the race, and sowed suspicion in their minds. The occasion may seem slight to us—the mere matter of the washing of hands. But the spiritual fact behind it is nothing less than the deep-seated instinct of nature-religion which is universal in mankind—the belief in the power of rite or rule to alter the spell of the Spirit-world from curse to blessing. Upon it the strength and security of the whole system of Jewish externalism rested. Jesus' repudiation of it touched the vital nerve of His people's faith in its most sensitive point. And it began to grow clear to Him that His crusade for the Kingdom of God was in peril of being ground between the upper and nether millstones of priestly prejudice and bigotry on the one hand, and the offended superstition and the

disappointment of crude popular expectation on the other.

In consequence of His rejection of these temptations, another and a more insidious began to loom up on the horizon of His soul. If He held on His way in the effort to win His own people for the holy cause of the Kingdom, He could discern beyond the priestly hate and the popular offence the pagan might of the great world-power that would be called in by-and-by as the instrument to destroy Him. He had met the temptation to seek world-power by the world's way of brute force long ago in the wilderness, and had set it aside. But He did want to win the world. Why should He forgo the hope to win it by His own way, love, even in His own life-time? And so, by way of off-set to the third of the wilderness temptations, came now the specious dream, clothed in robes of glittering grandeur, that if He turned away from Israel and carried His mission into other lands, thus escaping from the *impasse* that seemed now to be confronting Him, He might at length attain His object, and make the kingdoms of humanity the Kingdom of God.[1] Surely He could get the desired response from Gentile hearts. Did not the centurion manifest a greater faith than

[1] The conviction that the children of the Kingdom would be cast out and supplanted by Gentiles, came early to Jesus (Matt. $8^{11, 12}$). The tradition of Christ with which the writer of the Fourth Gospel was familiar has in it the echo of a Gentile call (John 12^{20-24}, cf. 7^{35}). The tradition about the invitation of King Abgar of Edessa may also be recalled. (Eus. H.E., i. 13).

any He had found in Israel (Matt. 8[10]) ? Did not the men of Nineveh hearken to the preaching of Jonah (Matt. 12[41]) ? Had not the Queen of the South been drawn by the wisdom of Solomon (Matt. 12[42]) ? And, in virtue of the Divine gift of grace and power bestowed on Him, He was greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon. For days and weeks the vision haunted Him. We hear echoes of the thoughts that swiftly came and went in His mind, in the words He spoke to the people of His native town amid the stillness of the cold reception that broke at length into hostile clamour and was like to end in tragedy. For such a policy as now kept assailing Him with its far-flung vision was there not Divine precedent and sanction in the sacred records of His people's history ? There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but unto none of them was the prophet sent, save only to a widow of that Sidonian city Sarepta. There were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha, yet none of them was cleansed but the Syrian soldier Naaman, a stranger to the holy faith. Yes, among alien faces the prophet often finds a welcome, though despised and discredited in His native land (Luke 4[25, 27], cf. Mark 6[1ff]).

Then, by the shore of the Lake, when He brought His Galilean ministry to a close, we listen again to the echo of this specious suggestion in the words of the last sad farewell. Woes that were heart-wrung

tears, sighs that were angels' swords, broke from His lips in judgment on the cities where He wrought and taught. "Alas! Chorazin, and thou too, Bethsaida! Ye know not what ye do. Would Tyre and Sidon have been so blind, so hard to move? Tyre would have wept, Sidon repented at my feet . . . Capernaum, Capernaum—lifted to heaven art thou? Casting me out, thou hast cast thyself down to hell! If Canaanite Sodom and Gomorrah had known the Holy Gift which walked thy streets, . . yes, they would have repented. They shall be thy judges" (Matt. 11^{20ff}).[1]

In the deep anguish of a torn and struggling heart, He set out to cross the borders of His native land—for a breathing space, a respite, and to wait the answer to the solemn problem that confronted Him. It was to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon that He came. The story of the Syro-Phœnician woman cannot be rightly understood until it is set against the background of this mighty storm of spirit, whose unrestrained fury was now sweeping through His soul. The strength of the temptation lies in its plausibility. There was so much to be said for it. Seen even in God's light, it seemed so real, so clear. The clamour of the Gentile need[2]—a world-wide kingdom of

[1] We have here, of course, thrown up into relief what is really an underground element of His thought, in these illustrations. cf. also Matt. 10^{15}.

[2] People from this region had been coming to hear Him in Galilee (Luke 6^{17}).

humanity for God—was not that God's call? The world for God within His own life-time! It was the supreme missionary impulse. Surely the shimmering robes of this haunting presence proclaimed it to be an angel of light. Could He be deceived?

"And yet—yet, my people, the children of the household, miserable, hungry of heart! . . . O my lost sheep, fainting, and scattered abroad, the sighing of your deep unrest constrains my heart, and holds me still. My Father, is it Thy lonely heart in exile that I hear, as once before I heard it by the river? What, then, is this messenger from the wider world that comes again and yet again to beckon me? The robes may be those of an angel of light, but the voice? What if it be the voice of the Tempter? 'All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will I give thee' . . . "

Very peaceful the world was here beneath the shadow of the mighty Lebanons and within the healing sound of the sea . . . But hark! What cry was that? A plaintive persistent note from the outer world was stealing in to the recesses of His soul, whither He had withdrawn in deep brooding and inward tumult, and dragging Him back to the present—a Gentile woman following behind, and calling pitifully "Help me, Lord; my daughter, my sore-vexed daughter . . . " Ah, it was the very voice of the Gentile world, touching Him

in His most tender place, sinking into the compassion of His heart at the very moment of His absorption in His people's misery. And He turned and looked on the woman, then lifted His eyes towards the mountain ridge that hid from Him the land He loved, and half to the woman, half to the winds that hurried southwards whither His heart still yearned to be, He said "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

It was His answer to this last temptation. And it was love that spoke the answer.

But what was love's reason? This is the matter that concerns us here. Why did our Lord resolve to return, and make one last heroic effort to win His people—this time from Judaism's central shrine? Why did He determine to go up to Jerusalem? "Was it to preach or die?" The question is asked by a recent writer.[1] And to his own question he is content to make the following reply: "To those who have studied the psychology of religious leaders the question is irrelevant. As well ask, Why did St. Paul go up to Jerusalem when the Spirit testified in every city that there were bonds and imprisonment awaiting him (Acts 20^{22f})? The modern reformer may study tactics and opportunities, but the great prophets of old on great occasions follow without question the admonition of an inner voice. It is the experience known as *leading*."

[1] "Foundations," p. 123.

Is that a satisfying answer? Must we regard our Lord as in the grip of an ideal world of purpose greater than He knew? Was His life simply the programme of a Higher Power worked out through Him as the unconscious and involuntary instrument? Was it only the δαιμονίον of a great spiritual genius, prompting Him, urging faith blind-folded forward into the dark, ever providentially directing Him to take the next right step in spite of His ignorance? Did He just lie passively surrendered to the Divine will, waiting at each new turning the summons of the mysterious voice?

Doubtless the soul of a man whose moral sense is flawless is a sensitive plate on which the light-rays of Divine revelation write their message almost without the subject being aware of it. Given the converging outer facts and conditions, such a being reacts with unerring, instinctive judgment to each fresh vicissitude in the unfolding of events. Even so, we must beware of saying that his action is being absolutely determined for him by Another Will. It is his own moral intuition that is the finally determining factor. It is as these external circumstances enter and pass through the alembic of his conscience. that the next step, the *only* step to take, leaps to the light, and the "Dweller in the Innermost" sends its message to the throne of the will. But we cannot stop there if we would be true to the inner experience of our Lord in this great crisis of His life. We

must bend our minds to the record to discern, if we may, the rational and moral content—clearly and definitely realised and consented to by Him—in the impulse of the Master to return to Palestine.

(1) Was it the result of an insight into the wisdom of the Divine economy, and a humble acceptance of the limitations which the mortal flesh prescribes to the workings of the Spirit? He shared the fellowship of our human finitude. To think to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth by a pouring forth of His spiritual energy in a wide-spread activity among the Gentiles seemed quixotic, if not indeed presumptuous. We know that Jesus recognised quite clearly the natural margin beyond which physical strength cannot go (Mark 14^{38}). He felt the frenzy that sometimes overtakes a man when the vision of responsibility far out-runs the natural capacity (Matt. 9^{37f}).[1] When He sent the disciples out, bidding them confine themselves to the cities of Israel, it was partly a counsel of tender wisdom, having regard to the home-feeling of these simple countrymen, and to the fact that their own speech would not be intelligible to any but to their own race. But above all there is the note of urgency in the command. The time was short. The day of Divine manifestation was at hand. So inevitably swift and near did He feel the march of events in the Unseen world to be, that He believed even this

[1] *Vide* Section II, Chapter II, p. 174.

limited task to be beyond their powers (Matt. 10$^{5f.}$ ^{23}). He learned by experience that God wrought not thus swiftly and overwhelmingly through men. That was not His way. One man begins the task. Others enter into his labours when he is gone. *His* present task must therefore be that of perfect obedience to the Divine will within the limits God had by nature assigned to Him. His vocation was wide as humanity was wide. Yet His effort would spend itself in a morass of futility if He aimed at immediate world-conquest. Not by an extensive, but by an intensive expenditure of spirit could He secure the Divine end. To accept the limitations of His humanity and concentrate upon the winning of His own people would lead eventually to the greater achievement for the world.

All this is very true. The steward of heavenly things must be wise as well as faithful. It was *one* element in the Master's reason for resolving to return to Palestine. But it was not, could not, be *the main* element. A decision reached on such grounds—the grounds of mere practical wisdom however lofty—has no absolutely compelling power about it. Jesus admired wisdom and foresight, but what drew Him most in man or woman was the all-or-nothing spirit. And this was the spirit that was pre-eminently His own. If the call of the wide world were in very truth the Divine call to Him, He would have heroically accepted the call. Heroism is a

kindling of the human spirit by the sight of a great ideal of duty, such that it transcends all ordinary physical limitations. And who will set limits to the heights of transcendence it might have attained in Him? But further, such a decision on grounds of practical wisdom is clearly one that has not yet reckoned with the possibility of a premature disastrous death awaiting His return.

(2) What then was the decisive reason? Are we satisfied with the view that it was the most perfect response to the call of patriotism? That it was such no one will deny. How rich and deep the feeling for race in that immortal phrase "the lost sheep of the House of Israel"![1] It is sometimes held that the saintly soul ought to know no fatherland but the land of the Spirit: that the instincts of nationality ought to play no part in his resolves and actions. But a man can most truly fulfil his *rôle* as a citizen of the ideal kingdom of humanity by labouring within his race, by submitting to be spent, to be broken if need be, in the effort to lift and perfect the life of his own land so that it may rightly fulfil its vocation in the community of the nations. And it was clear to Jesus, as He looked back over His people's history, that God had placed in their hands a sacred trust, a growing revelation of Himself, which they were some day to bequeath in finished

[1] It occurs also in the missionary injunctions to the disciples (Matt. 10^6).

splendour to all the human race. To liberate this spiritual treasure, the treasure of the unseen Kingdom, the law and power of the life Divine, was what He conceived His task to be. He must lift His nation, rulers and people alike, to the height of their great calling. He must aim at a " tremendous national *coup d'état.*"

But if He failed ? If He only led His people to destroy Him ? Ah, that was the great darkness which the mere call of patriotism could not overcome. If, by remaining where He had received His vocation, He became the occasion of a great public crime, would not that guilt-stain abiding on the conscience of His race create an eternal barrier to the final victory of the Divine purpose He had been commissioned to fulfil ? Would not His death be the demonstration of a human sinfulness as strong as the power and influence of His obedience ?

(3) No, the inner secret of the Master's motive lay deeper still. It was loyalty to the supreme cause, the Kingdom of God—a motive which transcends and includes the others—that was the impulse which set His face towards home and towards the Holy City, at the end of the struggle by the sea-shore at Tyre. His vocation was to establish the Kingdom of God in the world. Could He possibly do so, unless He Himself lived its life, perfectly realised its spirit and its law ? It was when it became clear that to carry such a perfect obedience

through to the end, within the borders of Palestine and in the heart of holy Judaism, was to lead to His physical extinction, that the question shaped itself before His mind: May I not achieve that perfect fulfilment of the Kingdom's law in another environment where the will of God may find a readier acceptance? To fling away, prematurely, as it seemed, the Divine gifts with which God had dowered His soul in measureless flood, by remaining in the station which birth and race prescribed, was a grave responsibility. Was that the way in which they could be made most effective in the accomplishment of God's will? Might He not abandon His own people, in whose midst the achievement of loyalty to the spirit of loyalty was *hopeless* without violent death, for some Gentile community where its achievement might be *possible* without this sacrifice? This was the battle which He fought out by the shores of Tyre. This was the last crucial temptation, a demon clad in God-like guise, soliciting His homage and allegiance.

But against the specious suggestion all the soul of loyalty in Him rose up in challenge. Would not this avoidance of the consequences of loyalty within the sphere where God had placed Him and called Him be itself a surrender of loyalty to the cause? If absolute devotion to the cause, even in an environment which would inevitably react in death-hatred, were evaded for a situation in which "loyalty"

might be maintained without incurring that, *then it would no longer be the Supreme Cause but something less than the Supreme Cause to which He would have transferred His allegiance.* For, if the cause is such that it ought to triumph, and is destined by God to triumph, in every human situation no matter how utter the antagonism, then it must be maintained in whatever opposing environment it finds itself, or it ceases to be itself. Even though, in some eviscerated form, it triumphed elsewhere, it could never become the ultimately redeeming Power for all the world.

It was into a mind withdrawn, remote, a conscience ardent and aflame with loyal love, that the plaintive cry of the Gentile world broke like a faint wave at His feet in the Syro-Phœnician woman's request. It was out of the depths of this intense and concentrated abstraction of spirit that the cry broke from His lips: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." It seems at first sight a renunciation of the supreme missionary passion; in reality it is the sublime utterance of that passion in the strangest of situations. All the yearning of the great wide world was in the agony with which the words throbbed from His lips, yet at the same time it is the uttered passion of the great resolve to be loyal to the cause in the heart of that which seemed about to destroy Him and the cause together. And to speak of that very destroying environment

as " the lost sheep of the House of Israel " was to speak the very language of the cause, to breathe the love which would break the hate which was to blot Him out in death. Yes, it was not so much " the House of Israel " that was the object of His deep desire. It was " the lost sheep." Lost !— The dreadful estrangement between sinful men and God—*that* was the gulf He had to cross. The sublime conviction now dawning on His soul, that loyalty to the Divine cause in the land of His birth would avail to conquer sin as great as that which was to work His doom, amounted to the complete identification of His will with the forgiving love of God. There was no help for it. Love could do no less. The Divine treasure would be set free, to become the possession of a sinful world, if not by His people's co-operation, then through them as the blind and shame-steeped instruments of sacrifice. And the Cross, which seemed the defeat of the cause, has, on the contrary, made its holy ideal shine as a bright and burning star before men's wondering eyes; —nay, has forever translated that ideal—the Kingdom's law of service to the uttermost—into a Divine fact and a living, spiritual power in the midst of human history, and made it the possession of all mankind.

Thus the Master's choice was made—*and death was in the choice.*

II

He comes at length with His disciple band to Cæsarea Philippi. And there, when He won from a disciple's lips at last the great recognition that in His utter consecration to the supreme purpose of the Divine Will He was indeed "the Son"—"the Son of God," He realised that the hour had come when He must take them into His confidence and unveil the coming doom. "He began to say unto them, The Son of man *must* suffer many things . . . . and be put to death." (Mark 8^{31}, Matt. 16^{21}, Luke 9^{22}). And in that "must," that solemn "it is necessary," a word which seems to have been more than once upon His lips throughout those closing days (cf. Luke 13^{33}, 17^{25}, 22^{37}, 24^{7}, Matt. 26^{54}), we have the clearest demonstration of the nature of the motive that drave Him to this last heroic resolve. It was no blind instinct, no involuntary conformity to the secret purpose of a Higher Will, no mysterious prompting of an inner monitor, no mere decision of the mind as to the course of greatest wisdom, no mere emotional, patriotic impulse, but a compulsion that had its origin in an overwhelming vision of the conscience, in the unwavering loyalty of a will utterly surrendered to the God-given vocation.

For there are but two alternatives before us. Either the relentless coil of giant circumstance was

closing round Him, dragging Him a helpless puppet towards the Cross—in which case this δεῖ, this "it is necessary," would have been the uttermost determinism however piously we might name it God; or, it was the "needs must" of the highest moral insight, the summons of the law of the Kingdom, which was greater than His physical life and completely swayed it—the "must" of God's supreme purpose to which He was dedicated. Even so, of course, there might have been no Cross;—yes, "might have been" in a different world from this. But when the compulsion of the Divine cause brings the surrendered will face to face with the dark tangle of human evil, it is then that the "Lo, thou must" of loyalty to the Highest triumphs over the outward pressure of brutal circumstance, and the acceptance of death becomes a spiritual victory. There is here in this word of Jesus a decisive flinging back of the soul upon the perception that the very life of God is sacrifice. That "the Son of man *must suffer* many things" is discerned by Jesus now to be among the "thoughts of God" for Him (Mark 8^{33}).

From the very first, there was in Jesus' mind a profound transvaluation of all the ordinary Jewish values in the Messianic hope. But this last step in which it is seen by Him transfigured in the awful light of sacrifice was utterly foreign to the mental atmosphere of the time. His disciples had never

dreamed of it, and failed to understand it. So in this part of the Synoptic narrative there are only a few passing, half-reluctant, and imperfect liftings of the veil from off this Holy of Holies in Christ's soul. What we hear comes to us somewhat muffled and obscured. Perhaps it is partly owing to the dullness of the reporters who forgot much that they could not comprehend. Perhaps it is partly because the confession froze on His lips in the presence of the chill and unreceptive atmosphere—the barrier of misunderstanding and partial estrangement which now fell between the disciples and their Lord. "Who so quick to feel that alienation as He? And who so likely to answer that frost by an inevitable reserve as this sensitive, high-strung soul?" Moreover a brave and chivalrous man will not speak much of suffering borne, or an evil fate in prospect, to those for whom it is being borne. Nevertheless we hear enough dimly to realise that behind all this prevision of the coming fate there is the background of ancient prophecy in His mind—prophecy in the light of which He read the Divine meaning of His life of sacrifice, and by the help of which He sought to fill out the interpretation of His death as God's will for Him. And it is the prophetic conception of "the *Suffering* Servant" which He now appropriates to Himself.

Long before, at the Baptism (Mark 1^{11}), and again to the messengers from the doubting John (Matt. 11^{4}),

and in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4^{18}), He made the daring identification of Himself with "the Servant" of prophetic expectation (cf. Is. 42^{1}, 61^{1}).[1] Here in this first announcement of the Passion, the Divine "must" reveals a mind that is dwelling again in prophecy. And it is He who is fulfilling the Messianic rôle, "the Christ" (Matt.), "the Son of man" (Mark, Luke), who *must suffer*. Mark records another announcement following swiftly on the heels of this, made to the three disciples as they descended from the Mount of Transfiguration: "He told them . . . how it is written of the Son of man that He must suffer many things and be set at naught . . . " (9^{12}). And in this saying we find πολλὰ πάθῃ—"He should suffer many things" set side by side with "it is written of the Son of man." Once more in Luke's account of the third great announcement of the Passion Jesus is reported as setting His death against the background of prophecy: " . . . all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished" (18^{31}). What was this great vision out of the holy past that now with such persistence filled His mind like the lingering, thrilling notes of a solemn symphony? In the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mark 12^{1-12}), spoken to the crowds about the Temple courts, we begin definitely to

[1] Professor A. E. Garvie ("The Inner Life of Jesus," p. 125) suggests that Christ's word at the Baptism about "fulfilling all righteousness" is a reference to Isaiah 53^{11}.

recognise the prophetic strains on which His mind was dwelling. There, as He traces out the path predestined for His race, He links Isaiah's picture of God's disappointment in His vineyard (Is. 5^{1ff}) with the conviction that the final act of the tragedy is to be the violent death of the Divine Owner's last messenger and servant, His own beloved Son. But in the great word spoken to the ambitious disciples the notes of the dirge are surely borne to our ears at length as through a suddenly opened door: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to be the servant, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10^{45}).—"Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace . . . upon Him . . .the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . . my righteous *servant* shall justify *many* . . . for He bare the sin of *many*"—yes, that was the music that was pouring through His soul (Is. $53^{5, 6, 11, 12}$). At the table of the Last Supper, and in the announcement of the betrayal, we faintly hear it again: "The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of Him" (Mark 14^{21}, Matt. 26^{24})—"as it was determined" (Luke 22^{22}). Again and again repeated, "it is written"! It cannot be but that in this phrase we are listening to the authentic voice of Jesus. And once again Luke adds a word of His table-talk which shows where His mind was brooding when He spoke the phrase: "Behold I am among you as He

that serveth" (22[27]). Always "the Servant," "the Servant"—and going "as it is written of Him," going meekly to die.[1] Yet once more, in the shadows of Gethsemane, when the band of the betrayer was about Him, there is heard the intimation of this conviction in the mind of Jesus that in Him is being wrought out the Divine purpose long foretold. In Mark's version it is an exclamation, terse, abrupt, laconic, life-like, as from a mind tense with excitement: "But the Scriptures must be fulfilled!" (14[49]). In Matthew it is lengthened somewhat: "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be" (26[54])? And if Luke's version be an interpreting paraphrase, the interpretation rings true: "For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, *And He was numbered with the transgressors.* For the things (written) concerning me have their consummation" (22[37]). Common to all the sayings is the "*must*" of prophetic fulfilment. And when Luke specifies the prophecy it is again the shattering picture of Isaiah 53[3].

[1] Perhaps there is also a reference to Daniel 9[26] here.

[2] Two further sayings in Luke, from the days beyond the Cross, may here be mentioned: one from the story of the road to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered . . .?" (24[25f]), and the other from the Upper Room: "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me, etc." (24[44ff]).—They are at least reflections of disciple-memories of His conversations before the Cross.

We have gathered these hints and intimations of the thought of the "Suffering Servant"[1] here proleptically in order that by observation of these outcroppings thrown up to the surface we may assure ourselves that it *was* part of the continuous and substantial strata of His soul in these closing days. We must now return to take up the thread of the story of this mighty struggle which began on the coasts of Tyre, and carry it to its climax on the Mount of Transfiguration—the scene of the third great spiritual ecstasy in the life of Jesus, the ecstasy of the consecration to the service of sorrow and death. It was the last great crisis in the experience of the Master before the Passion. It was here, we believe, that the full blaze of God's disclosure to the Son—that He was called to fill the *rôle* of the despised sufferer of prophecy—flooded the rapt

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The frequent recourse of Jesus to the Isaianic writings for the strengthening of His soul against the bitterness of present fact is noteworthy (Matt. 13^{14}=Isaiah 6^{9}; Matt. 15^{7}, Mark 7^{6}=Isaiah 29^{13}). The riding into Jerusalem as a symbolical identification of Himself with the Messiah of the sacred promises should also be recalled (Mark 11^{7}, etc.=Zech. 9^{9}). Probably, since Gethsemane is in the valley of Jehoshaphat, "the valley of decision," Matt. 26^{53} has a reference to Joel 3^{11},—a Messianic apocalypse. Christ's frequent recourse to the Psalms for Messianic references (Matt. 21^{16}=Psalm 8^{2}; 22^{43}=Psalm 110^{1}), twice at least for strengthening in His passion (Matt. 21^{42}=Psalm 118^{22}; 27^{46}=Psalm 22^{1}); and His use of the Messianic Apocalypse of Daniel should be recalled. Cf. also Matt. 23^{34ff}.

[1] Perhaps in His bearing as well as in His words Jesus reveals His assumption of the *rôle* of the Suffering Servant; in His patience, for example—one of the things which most impressed Peter in the judgment hall (1 Peter 2^{22}); and in His silence during trial—a picture of the dumb lamb (innocence and patience) led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53^{7}).

eyes of His spirit. It was here that in a definite and decisive act of will He accepted the uttermost dread summons of His vocation. It was here that as the solemn vista of the *via dolorosa* opened out before Him, and as He deliberately planted His feet in it, in an unfaltering obedience that strikes us dumb and lays us humbled in the dust before it, He heard again the Voice out of the Unseen, which crowned His earlier raptures : " My beloved Son."

Dimly through the story which the sleepy watchers told in later days we can discern some of the elements of His vision, caught by them from the broken words of prayer and communion which fell from the Master's lips as the moments of the ecstasy flew by. Here on the heights of Hermon, and beneath the far-gleaming snows of its summit, He stood on the margin of eternity, the veil of earthly finitude worn thin to transparency, and caught a glimpse of Home, the sweet and blessed country of His eager heart. Time had ceased, and space had vanished. Not only with His Father but with the great spirits of the past He held communion.[1] In spirit He is caught away to another holy mountain, to lonely Horeb in

[1] There is nothing strange in this phase of the experience of Jesus. It is in perfect harmony with His unique intimacy with God that all the unseen Spirit-World should seem close about Him ; that He should feel assured of a deep, loving, personal interest in His fulfilment of the Divine vocation on the part of the great departed figures of His people's past, and that He should commune with them. It was a way He had of regarding life in the Unseen (Luke 16^{23f}).

the desert of Sinai. He stands beside Elijah there as the wind, the earthquake, and the fire go by. . . .

Then the vision glides from the past to the present. By His side the form is still the rugged prophet of old, but infinitely meek and tender is the voice that speaks to Him:

"I too was tempted once to flee from the place that God appointed unto me—tempted to shrink from my dread vocation. I was very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts because the children of Israel had forsaken His covenant, thrown down His altars, and slain His prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, was left, and they sought my life to take it away . . . But I heard the still, small voice, and responded; God gave me courage by the vision of the hidden thousands who had not bowed the knee to Baal."

The voice recedes, and in the Father's presence Jesus kneels, and speaks:

"O Holy Father, I have heard and answered Thy call to return, and fulfil my vocation among Thy children of the House of Israel. And Thou hast comforted me in that precious word of recognition from my disciple's lips. My life's work will not be in vain. I too have my followers, unrevealed as yet—many who will confess my name, a holy assembly, against which the gates of death will not prevail. . . I shall see my seed. I shall prolong my days. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper

in my hand—when I have made my soul an offering for sin. Death? It will not be death, but *exodus*—the marching forth of my soul into the land of promise which lies beyond for me."

And while He prays and talks the vision grows. All His heroic soul leaps up with rapture to greet the dream of victory. His brow glistens with the mystic, starry light of hope and love and joy. His whole body is full of light. Somehow the darkness seems to have become light about Him. He is still in spirit far away among the rocks of Sinai. But the scene has changed. And lo! on the mountain side He meets one descending, whose countenance is shining even as His own. It is the leader of the great "exodus" of long ago. He joins his company and goes with him to the plain; witnesses again the breaking of the tables of the Law in anger; watches the prophet shatter the image of the false faith, and strew its golden dust upon the ground. And then He kneels beside him listening, while the broken words of intercession come: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; but if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."[1]

Again past merges into present, and through the silence words of encouragement and strengthening seem to fall upon His listening soul:

[1] Exodus 32[31].

"I too, foreshadowing and previsioning Thee, sought to make atonement for my people's sin. Fear not, Thou God-sent man, to look down on yon dark valley of conflict and the black eclipse of death —Thine exodus. His Presence will go with Thee."

"His Presence! That alone is what I seek. But will it be so all the way? It looks so dark and lonely on ahead. . . . O Father, even as Thy servant prayed, I pray: *If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.*[1] I stand on the threshold of the Unseen world, and my eyes are filled with an intense and eager longing for home. Home to Thy breast I fain would pass, as Elijah passed, as Moses passed, unseen, unknown to men. But Thy will be done. If Thou art with me, Father, I will fear no evil; death will not be death. Art Thou, then, with me? Am I truly Thy called and chosen servant?"

And in answer words of comfort come to Him out of the great pages of the ancient Law—whispered, as it seemed, by the very spirit of the Law-giver:

"The Lord did say to me, Behold I send an angel-messenger before thee . . . give heed to him and obey his voice . . . my name is in him."[2]

"Is it even so, my Father? Is the Angel of Thy Presence, bearing Thy very name, in me?"

[1] Exodus 33[15]. [2] Exodus 23[20f].

And once again the spirit of the Law-giver makes reply :

" Did not the Lord promise to me, when I enquired of Him in Horeb, saying, I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command. . . . Unto him shall ye hearken " ? [1]

" Art Thou, then, O Father, bringing that promise to pass again in me ? Am I Thy Prophet raised to speak Thy last, best word to men ? Even as Thy servant, am I too called to make atoning intercession for them—to be ready to be blotted out . . . . for them ? Even so, Father, if so it seem good in Thy sight—if by my sacrifice Thy reconciling forgiveness stand forth radiant and compelling before these lost sheep, a peace-offering for the long dearth of human love to Thee, a call of Love Divine summoning them back to Thee . . . The lost sheep of the House of Israel ! . . . And *I* Thy suffering servant ? . . . Like sheep they have gone astray. . . . Dost Thou lay upon me the iniquity of them all ? . . . As a lamb to the slaughter led . . . Yet there is victory beyond : he shall see of the travail of his soul . . . when he hath given his life a ransom for many ! . . . "

Full-orbed the ecstasy grows. Comforted,

[1] Deut. 18[15-18].

strengthened, confirmed by these holy memories, He is lifted to the very summit of vision. He enters into and becomes one with the deep longing of the Father's heart. He feels the Divine yearning towards the world,—a wistful eagerness that men would see in "the Son"—this Life of holy consecration—the great forgiveness accomplished; and receive it through Him. And down through the great, bright silence round Him on the holy mount once more the voice of the Divine delight in Him, the seal of the Father's utter and complete approval, falls: "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him" (Mark 9[7]).[1]

The streaks of day begin to come. The ecstatic splendour fades. The sleepy disciples, rousing themselves as from a trance—as though they too had been caught up into the ecstasy—behold Him now alone, and kneeling still. And on His face the majestic impress of a deep resolve.[2] The last sublime decision has been made, and fully ratified. The consecration unto sacrificial sorrow is complete. Henceforth, in all His movements there is about Him now the solemn sense of separation unto death. The period of the "dwelling in His Passion" has begun.

[1] Cf. Matt. 17[5], 2 Peter 1[17]—where it is the same as the voice at Jordan.

[2] 2 Peter 1[16].

III

Time and again with grave and earnest tones He sought to convince His disciples of the coming doom. Three times, it would appear, with grave and urgent emphasis. Here at Cæsarea Philippi:

" He *began* to teach them
that the Son of man must suffer many things,
and be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests and scribes,
and be killed,
—and after three days rise again" (Mark 8^{31}, Matt. 16^{21}, Luke 9^{22}).

Then on the eve of His departure for Jerusalem, as He unobtrusively and silently bade farewell to Galilee and stole secretly away:

" The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men,
and they shall kill Him,
—and after that He is killed He shall rise the third day" (Mark 9^{31}, Matt. 17^{22}, Luke 9^{44}).

Then as they were on the way going up to Jerusalem:

" Behold we go up to Jerusalem,
and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes;

and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles ;
and they shall mock Him, scourge Him, spit upon Him, kill Him,
—and the third day He shall rise again." (Mark 10^{33}, Matt. 20^{17}, Luke 18^{31}).

It was hard trying to sow this seed of sacrifice in these wayside minds. The birds of the air came and carried it away. Yet these moments of passionate instruction burst from Him like the pent-up anguish of a baffled heart that was nigh to breaking. Nor do they stand alone. Coming down from the mount of consecration He seems to have repeated the announcement to the three (Mark 9^{12}). Matthew reports an announcement before the feast at Bethany (26^{2}). And when at this mistimed entertainment offered to a breaking heart a woman anoints His head and feet, He finds in it the unspoken sympathy of love's insight, and a responding word, veiled and mysterious, about "the day of my burial," slips through the barriers of His reserve (Mark $14^{7.8}$). Luke mentions one reference which, coming in a discourse about the last things, belongs probably to the Passion week (17^{25}). Finally at the Last Supper in all the added bitterness of the impending betrayal it is said again (Mark $14^{18,21}$, Matt. $26^{21,24}$, Luke 22^{21ff}). And it is heard in a word at the table which Luke alone records (Luke 22^{15}).

The Apprehending of the Cross

In the record of Mark (which is possibly closest to the *ipsissima verba* here) none of the announcements, with all their increasing fullness of detail, speak of crucifixion or a Cross—though Luke and Matthew do. The point is of slight significance There can be no doubt that this suggestion—as to the manner of His death—did definitely present itself to His mind. He had doubtless seen a ghastly procession sometimes on the roads of Palestine, a poor wretch dragging a cross, followed perchance by others in a like predicament, hedged in with Roman spears. And it was soon after the first announcement that He solemnly warned His followers what their accompanying Him on this last, dread journey to the Holy City would involve. It meant renouncing everything, it meant the denial of self, it meant for each the shouldering of a cross (Matt. 16^{24}).

These solemn announcements are, it has been said, outflashings from what was now the central fire in His soul. "They are the sparse self-revelations of a mighty soul wrapped in a crushing task. They are forced from His silent depths only by a rare and solemn conjunction.[1] . . . They are not lessons, but agonies, not suggestions but groans. They do not flow from Him, they are wrung. They convey Himself rather than His truth, His heartbreak

[1] παρρησίᾳ, (Mark 8^{32})="freely," *i.e.*, frankly ;—not a reference to frequency but to manner, induced by Peter's recognition.

rather than His discourse. They are of the utterances that are deep deeds rather than strong words. They are preludes or facets of the one deed of that Cross through which at last His whole person poured as in a narrow gorge and gate of hell ere it broke broad into the Kingdom of Heaven."[1]

Yet it is just here, in this new phase of Christ's self-revelation, that the sceptical critic begins to refuse most stubbornly to accept the record. Such prophecies of a coming death lie beyond reason for him. But if, as we have tried to show, Christ clearly saw the issues of His unfaltering obedience, and accepted the consequence, they are no longer mysterious words spoken *in vacuo*. They spring quite naturally out of the heart of the heroic resolve of loyalty. There is nothing in them of the "supernatural." They are but the expression of a profound and piercing moral insight. And the last shadow of incongruity or unnaturalness about them —if any shadow there be—completely vanishes when we begin to observe the steadfast tenor of the Master's thought from the dread moment of decision onwards. There is an intensified note of urgency, of moral concentration, in His movements and His words, a harsh, brusque note amounting almost to impatience, wrung in anguish from His breast. He feels Himself surrendered, dedicated to a dreadful task. In the light of its grim reality the life of the

[1] P. T. Forsyth: *Expositor*, June, 1916.

world around Him seems sunk in an idle dream, or like a tale shut within the pages of a book. At the foot of the mount He cries, " O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? How long must I suffer you (Mark 9^{19}) ? " There follows the anguished call for a decision from His disciple band. To part from them now seemed like parting from His only hope of victory beyond the Cross ; yet to drag them *blindly* after Him to Jerusalem, perchance to share His doom, was a thing impossible to contemplate. The grisly picture of the cross-bearing procession (Matt. 16^{24}) is lifted frankly up before their startled minds. And then with a finality which no philosophy has ever equalled He speaks the last truth of morality which two thousand years of ethical wisdom have not yet plumbed : " He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul (Matt. 16^{25f}) ? " The cross lies before us if you choose to follow, but beyond the cross—life eternal. A little while of earthly love and comfort if you choose this present world and stay behind, but with it all the soul despoiled, life thrown away, and lost.

It seems also that a few of the dwindling circle of followers who still clung to Him began to speak to Him about following when they saw Him making ready for departure. To one light-hearted, undis-

cerning soul He said " Friend, would you follow an outlaw ? Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Luke 9^{57f}). To one who felt the constraint of filial obligation to an aged father He spoke the word which is as harsh as the truth is harsh in many an ultimate moral dilemma, " Let the dead bury their dead" (Luke 9^{60}). To yet another who said " I am willing, but let me at least go back and bid my family farewell " He said " The plough is in the furrow ; the least little backward look undoes the whole. No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God " (Luke 9^{62}). It was no time for idle dallying. The path that stretched before them was the path of uttermost consecration, with death at the end. That is a situation which demands that even the dearest earthly ties be torn from the heart and flung away (Matt. 10^{35-39}). " Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth : I came not to send peace but a sword " (Matt. 10^{34}, Luke 12^{51})—the sword of division, separation—the sword that severs clean the new life of spiritual consecration from the tender and familiar ties of the world.

Yes, clearly everything else but the goal of His passionate pilgrimage has begun to wear a strange, distant, unreal aspect to Jesus. He has climbed up from the sequestered, flower-starred ways of life, and through its wooded slopes, and up the lowering

precipice of decision. He has won His way up and out on to the exalted table-land of utter consecration. He stands amid the giant summits, and before Him towers the snow-white peak of sacrifice stained with the crimson light of waning day. All the old, sweet, happy life of Galilee has faded from His interest Down in the dim, blue mist of the valley far beneath the old joys are but shadows passing in a dream. It seemed almost as if He had awakened from that dream to front the great reality, bare and forbidding, cold and stern. And words come floating to us from the lonely heights, tense with the passion of His high resolve: "I am come to throw fire upon the earth. How I would it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptised with"—a new sacrament of consecration to make in blood. "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke $12^{49,50}$) . . . "To-day and to-morrow I must work . . . and on the third day I complete my task. But I must journey on, to-day, to-morrow, and the next day: it would never do for a prophet to perish except in Jerusalem" (Luke 13^{32f}). There is an extraordinary pathos in the repeated phrase; as if the great soul, caught up into the world of tragic movement, and under the pressure of the eternal significance of the unfolding heavenly drama, looks down almost with a feeling of oppression—a chafing at restraining fetters—as time flows by beneath. There is a strange deliberation

about the ticking of the seconds, the flight of time. Again and again the eager mind, straining at the leash of finitude, yet also committing Himself to it in confidence as part of His Father's plan, goes running out over the arches of the span of time that lies between Him and the goal.

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time."

It is a familiar trick of the mind, intensely strung, in a tragic situation.

Why! such a prolonged period of spiritual stress and turmoil with the heightened moral vision that accompanies it almost demands the announcements of the Passion as its inevitable outcome. We are permitted to see it all in one vivid scene in which terror and amazement mingle. Yonder He strides along the road, the world forgotten. His winged spirit rushes out to clasp the cup of heroic obedience. His cheek is pale. His lips are set. His eyes burn strangely as in one possessed. His pace has quickened. He has drawn ahead of the Twelve Travel-worn they stumble on behind—watching His face, exchanging mutual glances, and whispered exclamations of wonder and of fear. Suddenly He grows aware of the hushed and stricken voices. And He turns, and with swift, impulsive gestures beckons them—nay, thrusts them—to the wayside for a short breathing space. That is the setting in which

the third of the deliberate announcements was made (Mark 10^{32}).

But there is one feature common to these announcements, which the naturalistic critic will not for a moment entertain. On each of these occasions Jesus is reported to have spoken not only of the certainty of the approaching death, but with an equal assurance of a succeeding resurrection. What shall we say of it? Once more we return to watch Him in this prolonged, exalted mood of consecration. And running through it like a vein of fire we can detect the emotion that speaks of *victory*. All through His ministry the conviction of ultimate victory was an essential part of His dream of the Kingdom. It now becomes the certainty of victory achieved through, and beyond, His death. From the hour of Peter's recognition it is clearly there: "Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16^{18}). On the mount of consecration, His death was spoken of as "exodus": it was the gateway to *His* promised land, the establishment of the Kingdom (Luke 9^{31}). The losing of life for the great cause was the true way to the finding of it (Matt. 16^{25}). The fire that He was sent to cast upon the earth was certain to be kindled, and to spread—caught by adoring hearts from the blaze of the love Divine in Him that was urging Him forward to His dread baptism of blood (Luke 12^{49f}). The Kingdom

must triumph because it was God's purpose. And He must triumph with it because death could not defeat the Father's will which He was following in uttermost obedience. Sometimes this vision of victory clothed itself in apocalyptic imagery. The Son of Man would come again upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. 24^{30}; Matt. 26^{64}, Mark 14^{62}, Luke 22^{69}; Mark 13^{26} etc.). The Divine victory would not be complete unless He through whose obedience it was to be achieved was present in the triumph. It was not possible, as Peter later said, that He should be holden of death (Acts 2^{24}). There is no note of exaggerated self-importance here. The Father who had taken to do so intimately and so definitely with His life—given Him a task which was none other than God's supreme purpose for the world—the God who was present with Him and within Him was not the God of the dead but of the living (Mark 12^{27}). If death could not make Him break His resolve to live in the Father's will, death would not, could not, make God let go His grasp of Him. The keepers of the vineyard might cast Him out and slay Him. That would be but their judgment (Mark $12^{9,10}$). They would cease to be the guardians of the heavenly treasure. It would pass into other hands to become the possession of all the world. The stone which the builders had rejected, the same would become the head of the corner: the Lord's doing. "Destroy this temple,"

He said in challenge to the rulers, "and in three days I will raise it up again" (John 2^{19})[1]. They by their blindness and unfaithfulness might bring Israel's Zion to naught, so that not one stone would be left standing upon another; but in its place would arise the true Zion, a temple made without hands (Mark 14^{58})—and that right soon. "Three days"? The words are not to be imprisoned in a rigid and unspiritual literalism of interpretation. It is a colloquialism[2] rendered intense, solemn, and inspiring in its confidence by the mood of the Master when He spoke it. His death would be but the sealing of the New Covenant which would displace the old forever (Mark 14^{24}). His spirit would return to earth again to live on in the world in the hearts of all His ransomed. His return would be a conqueror's return.

To-day and to-morrow and the next day I must work
—and then the end.
To-day and to-morrow and the next day I must journey on
—and then the prophet perishes in Jerusalem.
To-day, and to-morrow and the next day I will sleep in death
—and then I will rise.

Yes, death lay before Him, but He would rise—He would rise from the dead!

[1] This is certainly a genuine saying of the Master's (Mark 14^{58}, 15^{29}), though the placing of the cleansing of the Temple in John is almost certainly due to the symbolism of this Gospel. It belongs to the closing phase. There is in the word a reference to Isaiah's hope that "the servant" would restore Zion ($49^{6, 18}$, 25^{6ff}).

[2] Cf. Hosea 6^{2}. Cf. our phrase "the day after to-morrow," or our still more suggestive Scotticism "the morn's morning." Cf. "yet a little while" John 16^{16ff}.

And now at length we are drawing near to the blood-red centre of His Passion, the heart of the inner experience of Jesus. His costly deed of sacrifice rose up before His vision in the sacred symbol of "the cup." "My cup" He called it in His interview with the ambitious sons of Zebedee (Mark 10^{38})—"the cup that I shall drink of" (Matt. 20^{22}). It was "His portion," His "lot" in life, assigned to Him by the will and providence of God.[1] And at the Last Supper when He took the cup He said "This cup is the (new) covenant in my blood, which is shed for many" (Mark 14^{23f}, Matt. 26^{27}, Luke 22^{20}). Out of the Father's vineyard the wine of the ripe fruit was to be pressed at last in the wine-press of Israel's pride and hate and scorn—the wine press of the Divine agony. And it was in the Death upon the Cross that all the forth-flowing holy energy of God—the very law of whose being is sacrifice—was to be pressed in one distilled and concentrated blood-red draught of forgiveness. The golden chalice was the love of Jesus held in the grasp of a perfect obedience.

And yet—and yet—He passes to the garden and He kneels in agony to pray, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26^{39}, Mark $14^{35, 36}$, Luke 22^{42}). What is the bitterness within that cup that makes Him shudder and sweat

[1] Cf. John 18^{11}: "The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It was a symbol of the days of Israel's ancient piety. Psalm 23^{5}, 16^{5}, 116^{13}.

blood-drops of agony? Not the fear of physical extinction (Matt. 10[28]), and not the wavering of faith in victory (Matt. 26[53], [64]). But dread of the death within the death. The black coil of human evil was closing round Him. Lonelier and lonelier grew His way. His home had repudiated Him. Fair-weather followers had turned back and walked no more with Him. Popularity had given place to offended suspicion; pride in high places had turned to bitter hate. His disciples had misunderstood and grown afraid of Him and estranged. One was about to betray, and one to deny; the rest to forsake Him and flee. Mocking and scourging and spitting and jeering were about to intrude between His compassion and the unrest, the deep need of men in which He had seen the appealing face of God. He was alone—alone. His very obedience which brought Him to His unique intimacy with God was leading Him down into a place from which not merely the inward but also the outward fact of the presence of God was being withdrawn. Life even for a single moment without the presence of God?—the darkness—how great! Could He endure it, and still obey? Could the Father in reason demand it of the Son? What could the dark dregs of this bitter cup imply? "If it be possible let it pass." His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. God-possession through obedience—yes; but God-loss through obedience?—What was He to do?

. . . There was only one thing to do—still obey! "Not my will, but Thine be done."

And on the Cross the presence of His Father ebbed from His soul, and receded till the cord of faith was stretched to breaking point. Yet the cry went up from the deeps to the heights, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15^{34}). "Forsaken,"—and yet "My God, my God" still. For a moment He hung exhausted. And then He bowed His head. The last word was still a word of faith. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23^{46}).

To the last breath He had kept His pledged word to God.

AFTERWORD

ALL the Father's delight was in the flawless obedience of this human life. God had given Himself to this Man of Nazareth, disclosed the heart of His heart to Him, until Jesus knew Him as the Father, and could call Himself, by a right that no one else could claim, "the Son."

"If *He* should die then God Himself would die."

Something like that was what happened on the Cross. It was as bitter a thing for God to have died out of the soul of Jesus, as it was for Jesus to have been bereft of God. Yet that was the cost of God's forgiveness. In that dread hour of dereliction the Spirit of God experienced a spiritual agony that was deeper than death. "Never was feeling further from the fact" than when Jesus cried "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Even in the deepest hour of the dark eclipse of the Son's communion with the Father He and the Father were one. There in that life, in the centre of human history, and supremely upon the Cross, God's heart looked out at last through human eyes into the wistful faces of seeking men.

FINIS.

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